MASK OF TRAGEDY

A FOUR-PART ADVENTURE BY JAMES GOSS

DRAMATIS PERSONAE:

THE DOCTOR – 900 year old time traveller

ACE – a young woman from Perivale

HECTOR – 20s, from the North

DIONYSOS – (*Die-On-I-Sos*) the Greek God of Chaos (also Hector)

ARISTOPHANES – (*Ah-Rist-Off-A-knees*) a Greek playwright (30s?)

CLEON – (*Klee-On*) the ruler of Athens. In his 30s (maybe)

TYRGIUS – (*Turge-ee-us*)a handsome tourist (20s)

TELEPHUS – (*Tel-ee-fuss*)a spy (40s?)

ADONIA – (*Adoh-knee-a*)a young female Spartan warrior (20s)

AND BRIEFLY:

GUARD – an Athenian guard (20s)

CISYPHUS – (*Sissy-fuss*) a Greek actor (30s)

SLAVE TRADER – a slave trader (40s)

LYSISTRATA – (*Lie-sis-tra-ta*)a young female slave

THE PEOPLE OF ATHENS, JURORS

FEMALE SPARTANS

SCRIPT EDITOR: JONATHAN MORRIS **PRODUCER:** DAVID RICHARDSON
EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS: NICHOLAS BRIGGS & JASON HAIGH-ELLERY

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EPISODE 1

SCENE 1: A CELL

FX: PRISONY. UNDERGROUND. CLEON COMES THROUGH A HEAVY DOOR. DISTANTLY A CROWD SHOUTS AND SCREAMS.

CLEON:
So, you're the new god?

DIONYSOS:
If you say so.

CLEON:
Can you hear that outside? The chaos on my streets?

DIONYSOS:
They're as much my streets.

CLEON:
This is all your doing, isn't it? Happy now?

DIONYSOS:
Are you happy?

CLEON:
My happiness doesn't come into it! Plague! War! Monsters! Now Madness! Stop this. Save my city.

DIONYSOS:
It is not your city, Cleon.

CLEON:
It'll never be yours. Soon there'll be no-one left. (BEAT)

No. You're not a god. You're just a man. An actor hiding behind a mask, that's all. Do you have any idea what you're playing at?

DIONYSOS: (change of character)
Well, look, it's a bit complicated...

SCENE 2: ATHENS

FX: THE DOCTOR'S WORDS ARE INTERCUT WITH TERRIBLE THINGS HAPPENING.

THE DOCTOR:
The City of Athens.

FX: A CROWD SCREAMS IN TERROR.

THE DOCTOR:
An ancient civilisation of philosophers and poets.

FX: THE WINGS OF A DEADLY BEETLE:

LYSISTRATA:
Keep it back! No! No!

THE DOCTOR:
The birthplace of theatre, of philosophy, of democracy.

BACCHAE: *(shouting)*
Die! Die! Die! Die!

THE DOCTOR:
It has its ups and downs, of course...

FX: A CROWD SCREAMS IN MADNESS

MAN:
The madness is spreading! The madness! It's the end of the world! Oh, gods!

THE DOCTOR:
But on the whole, Ace and Hector, I think you're going to like it here.

FX: A SUDDEN FLASH OF FULL AND BLOODY BATTLE.

SCENE 3. THE SPARTAN CAMP.

FX: ACE IS ADDRESSING THE SPARTAN ARMY AROUND A CAMP FIRE. IT'S A WARM SUMMER NIGHT.

ACE:
So girls, where were we? I guess I'm the chorus. Not really what I had planned. But that's how these things should be done. And there are worse jobs.

I could be behind the eight-items-or-less counter down the Perivale Co-Op. Don't ask. Instead, I'm here as your chorus.

Every Greek play should have one, apparently. And I've nothing better to do for a bit.

The Doctor says that when theatre started it was almost by accident. People gathered to hear poems sung about heroes. And then, one day, someone stepped forward from the choir and pretended to be the hero. That was how it all began. With a hero.

The thing is, the chorus got left behind. Standing around like gooeseberries while the hero did his hero thing. There were rules for plays. Unity of time, unity of place. You had to have a hero. A villain. And you always had to have a chorus whether you wanted them or not. Lurking. Waiting. Doing the gossip. *Hollyoaks*, basically.

So, since there are rules, and I've always loved rules, I'm going to be your chorus. With your help.

LAUGHTER

ACE:
Any questions, girls? No? All right then. (coughs)

The year is 421 BC.
Well, not as far as you're concerned, it isn't. You lot don't sit around saying "Hey, only another 421 years Before C turns up." Cos if you did, you'd have a lot of tough questions to answer from The Men In High Collars.

(sighs) Let's start again.
It's business as usual for you. Although not for me.
You see, we're travellers in time and space.
And we'd come to Athens.
We? The Doctor, Hector and me.
The hero, the villain, and the chorus.
Only it's not that simple.
As you'll see....

FX: UNDER PREVIOUS SPEECH, SOUND OF THE TARDIS MATERIALISING GROWS

SCENE 4. THE TARDIS.

ACE:
You ready, Hector Schofield?

HECTOR:
For what?

ACE:
Any minute now the Doctor will open the doors and you'll step outside into history.

HECTOR:
Oh, that.

ACE:
You'll like it. Hex used to like it.

HECTOR:
Don't keep measuring me against him.

ACE:
Sorry.

HECTOR:
I'm not Mr Perfect.

ACE:
Neither was he. Trust me, half an hour after a lentil stew he was really bad news.

HECTOR:
I'll try to steer clear of lentils then. Anything else I need to know?

ACE:
It's history. Established fact. So don’t change it.

HECTOR:
How?

ACE:
Well, don't go killing your grandfather.

HECTOR:
It's Ancient Greece. What'd my grandfather be doing in Ancient Greece?

ACE:
Getting ALL the Doctor's attention.

THEY SMILE.

HECTOR:
I get it. Don't interfere. Easy.

FX: ENTER THE DOCTOR

THE DOCTOR:
Ace, Hector! Shall we do this?

HECTOR:
What. Are. You. Wearing?

THE DOCTOR:
It's a toga.

ACE:
You've changed your clothes? You never change your clothes.

THE DOCTOR:
I want to fit in.

HECTOR:
You're carrying an umbrella.

THE DOCTOR:
It may rain. How are you, Hector?

HECTOR:
Fine. Why does everyone keep asking?

ACE:
Because we care about you.

HECTOR:
You don't even know me. (PAUSE) Sorry. Come on. Open the doors.

THE DOCTOR:
You'll like history. It's fun. (PAUSE) Aren't you going to change?

FX: DOORS OPEN

HECTOR:
Nah. I'll take these off as soon as we hit the beach. Always fancied Greece. Sun, Sea and Calamari! Brilliant!

FX: HE RUNS OUT.

THE DOCTOR:
(CALLING AFTER HIM) Um, Hector...

ACE:
There isn't a beach is there?

HECTOR: (distant, angry)
Oi!

THE DOCTOR:
No. But in good news, the Spartan army isn't actually at the gates of Athens. That's tomorrow.

ACE:
Oh well done. Poor Hector.

THE DOCTOR:
He ticked the box to say he'd read the terms and conditions.

HECTOR: (distant)
Hey! Doctor, come out here. There's a man with a sword says he knows you.

THE DOCTOR:
Narrow it down.

SCENE 5. A BEDROOM.

FX: AN OLD MAN LIES MUTTERING ON HIS BED IN A SMALL STONE HOUSE.

OLD MAN:
Duh.... Duh... Duh...

BOY:
Dad! Come on. Wake up. The fever's not that bad. They say you'll snap out of it any day now. (LYING) Any day. Come on...

OLD MAN: (soft)
Die...

BOY:
What's that?

OLD MAN:
Die-Die-Die...

BOY:
You're not dying!

OLD MAN: (licks lips, grunt)
Die... Die... DIE!

FX: A BUZZING OF A GIANT BEETLE

BOY:
No, what are you! Keep away! Keep away from us!

FX: CRASH OF FURNITURE

BOY:
Leave my dad alone!

FX: BUZZING GROWS

OLD MAN:
Die! Die! DIE!

SCENE 6. THE THEATRE.

FX: A 17,000 SEAT OPEN-AIR THEATRE. THE TARDIS HAS LANDED IN THE SEMI-CIRCULAR PERFORMANCE SPACE (STONE & SAND). THE SEMI-CIRCULAR SEATS ARE REACHED BY STONE STEPS. THE ACOUSTICS ARE AMAZING – A VOICE WILL CARRY FROM THE STAGE TO THE VERY TOP.

ARISTOPHANES:
Doctor!

THE DOCTOR:
Aristophanes!

ARISTOPHANES:
You're late.

THE DOCTOR:
It happens. You've met my friend.

HECTOR: (hiss)
Sword. Neck.

ARISTOPHANES:
You owe me money, Doctor.

THE DOCTOR:
So I do. Here.

FX: BAG OF MONEY THROWN.

THE DOCTOR:
Stop jabbing my friend with your sword.

ARISTOPHANES:
Ach, it's only a prop. Wouldn't cut bread.

HECTOR: (doubtful)
Really?

ACE:
What's going on?

THE DOCTOR:
Aristophanes! Meet my friends Ace and Hector.

ARISTOPHANES:
Hector? A fine Greek name. A hero's name. Are you a hero?

HECTOR:
No.

ARISTOPHANES:
Pity. We could do with one.

ACE:
Why is the Doctor paying you money?

ARISTOPHANES: (admiring)
Hello! Where are you from, my naiad? (*nigh-ad*)

ACE:
Perivale.

ARISTOPHANES:
And when? Which century?

ACE:
How do you...?

ARISTOPHANES:
My dear girl, this is Ancient Greece, the most famous civilisation in the history of Earth. We get visitors all the time, from all of time.

HECTOR:
Hang on, I thought you said we should be careful with history.

ACE:
I did.

HECTOR:
Then...?

THE DOCTOR: (coughs)
Ancient Greece - Cradle of civilisation and temporal tourist hotspot. One of the reasons I like to keep an eye on Athens.

HECTOR:
By paying this gangster hush money?

ARISTOPHANES:
I'm no gangster. I'm a playwright.

THE DOCTOR:
And I'm his sponsor.

ACE:
His what?

THE DOCTOR:
It's a hobby. I like theatre.

HECTOR:
Come again?

ARISTOPHANES:
My dear sir. This is the Theatre of Dionysos. Drama was invented here. Two steps to the left of you. I was here when it happened.

THE DOCTOR:
Fibber.

ARISTOPHANES:
Shush. (GRANDLY) It was at the Festival of Dionysus.

HECTOR:
Who he?

ARISTOPHANES:
The god of misrule, of chaos, of madness, and wine.

THE DOCTOR:
The God of Fun.

ARISTOPHANES: (belches)
Every year the populous gather in his name. We watch plays – tragedies to make you cry and low comedies about bodily functions. Wretched stuff.

HECTOR:
And you write...?

ARISTOPHANES:
Sadly, my serious stuff never sells. But the Doctor is kind enough to pay for a comedy of mine, every year. Hack work. But, alas, people seem to like them. They do keep winning prizes.

THE DOCTOR COUGHS

ARISTOPHANES: (wounded)
You still get a prize for coming third. Even if it is, technically, last. Mind you, this year... tough crowd. Athens is beset by sand-hundred-heaps of trouble. Endless war with Sparta. A plague. Flying monsters terrorise us after dark. Basically, it’s the end of the world.

THE DOCTOR:
Monsters? Interesting.

SCENE 7. THE CELLS

DIONYSOS:
So that's where we were, Lord Cleon. The Doctor had come to Athens to help Aristophanes put on a show. But his friends thought there were more important things to do. For instance...

CLEON:
The monster?

DIONYSOS:
Yes. Tell me about it.

CLEON:
It haunts the streets, it visits my dreams. The flying scarab. A Fury.

DIONYSOS:
A Fury only hunts those who have done wrong. What have you done wrong, Cleon?

CLEON:
Nothing! (PAUSE) I - don't know.

DIONYSOS:
No? And what about the plague?

CLEON:
The plague? The Dance of the Mad.

SCENE 8. THE THEATRE

CISYPHUS: (sings tunelessly, at a distance)
For I'm a jolly wineskin
And my story does begin (COUGHS, STAMMERS) Dio... Dion.... Die...
I'm happiest when I'm fat
And I'm saddest when I'm thin!

FX: SINGLE DISTANT HANDCLAP

CISYPHUS: (distant)
Oh Dio... dear. Master Aristophanes, should we leave a long gap there? For the spontaneous applause?

ARISTOPHANES:
Of course, Cisyphus, of course.
(UP CLOSE)
Not that there'll be any if he can't get his words out.
This year's play is a little rough around the edges, Doctor.

THE DOCTOR:
A little?

ARISTOPHANES:
A lottle.

THE DOCTOR:
Umm.

ARISTOPHANES:
It's poor Cisyphus. Actors, eh? Can't live with 'em, can't strangle 'em with your bare hands. And Cisyphus – bag of nerves. (LOUD) Aren't you, dear? NERVES!

CISYPHUS: (distant, stammering)
Er... um... errrr.... did I do something wrong? Dionoh, Dio... I, er... Wineskin. Jolly! Happy.... (SLURS) Die... die.

CISYPHUS FALLS TO THE FLOOR.

THE DOCTOR:
Is he all right? He seems... unwell.

ARISTOPHANES:
There’s a lot of it going about. It's the plague, you see.

THE DOCTOR: (shouts)
Hector! Hector!

SCENE 9. THE STAGE.

DIONYSOS: (narration)
You see, Hector had, in a former life, been a different man. A Man of Medicine. A hero.

FX: UNDER THIS, RUNNING. CISYPHUS GROANING ("DIE... DIE...DIE...").

ACE:
What's happened to him?

HECTOR: (to Cisyphus)
It's all right, mate. You're going to be Okay.
(to Ace)
What do I do, Ace? What's wrong with him?

ACE:
He's having a fit.

FX: CISYPHUS CHOKES AND THRASHES.

ACE:
His tongue. Stop him swallowing his tongue.

HECTOR:
Right. Arg! He bit me! (PAUSE, HYSTERIA) What am I doing? I'm in Ancient Greece holding a strange bloke's tongue.

ACE:
Had worse holidays?

FX: CISYPHUS GROANS

HECTOR:
Yeah. (TO CISYPHUS) That's right. Gently does it... it's okay, sleep. (SIGHS) I'm useless, aren't I?

ACE:
You're not... useless. Just, you know, waiting for the right situation to come along.

HECTOR:
Well, if anyone owes the Doctor money, I'm happy to help out.

ACE:
Maybe Aristophanes has a garage you could burn down.

HECTOR:
Why'd the Doctor ask me to help this guy? There's nothing I can do for him.

ACE:
Perhaps he forgot.

HECTOR:
Or wanted to jog my memory. Applying the pressure. (RUEFUL) I know the signs. Well Doctor, doesn't look like my memory's going to pay up.

ACE: (without conviction)
The Doctor wouldn't [do that]

HECTOR:
Wouldn't he?

ACE:
Well…

FX: CISYPHUS MAKES A NOISE.

ACE:
He's getting up. Give him a bit of room. Are you alright?

FX: CISYPUS GROANS, STANDS AND MOVES AWAY ("DIE-DIE-DIE")

HECTOR:
An actual zombie. Wow.

FX: THE DOCTOR AND ARISTOPHANES RUN DOWN

THE DOCTOR:
Sorry – we were a long way up. Marvellous acoustics. What's happened to him?

ARISTOPHANES:
Poor Cisyphus. (CALLS OUT TO GATEKEEPERS) Let him go.

FX: CISYPHUS LEAVES, GROANING AND SNARLING.

THE DOCTOR:
Extraordinary.

ARISTOPHANES:
The plague victims used to just die. Now they gather on street corners. Mumbling. Sinister lot.

THE DOCTOR:
Recent development?

ARISTOPHANES:
Last three months. Athens is full of them – the walking dead.

THE DOCTOR:
Odd.

ARISTOPHANES:
Odd? It's terrible. I'm an actor down. My script's dreadful... oh, it'll be the worst play ever. I'll come fourth. Out of three.

THE DOCTOR:
Don't be hasty... He may recover...

ARISTOPHANES:
Doubtful. They just stand around. Sometimes they dance like madmen.

ACE:
Funny sort of plagueif you ask me.

THE DOCTOR:
Yes. There's been plague in Athens before – but not like this. Hector, I've got a job for you. Fancy being an actor?

HECTOR:
No ta.

ACE:
I'll do it!

ARISTOPHANES:
By all the gods no. You're a woman. Women can't act.

ACE:
What!?!?

ARISTOPHANES:
Sorry pet. I don't make the rules.

SCENE 10. CLEON'S PALACE.

FX: A HALL OF MARBLE AND SOFT FURNISHINGS

DIONYSOS: (narration)
And while that was going on, Lord Cleon, the arrival of the strangers had reached your ears in the palace...

FX:ENTER TELEPHUS AT A RUN.

TELEPHUS:
My noble Lord Cleon! Strangers have been sighted in the Theatre of Dionysus.

CLEON:
Strangers, spymaster?

TELEPHUS:
Aliens.

CLEON:
Tourists, now?!? Our city's starving and the universe comes to gawp for their amusement.

TELEPHUS:
Yes, my Lord.

CLEON:
Can we blame them for something? The plague, perhaps?

TELEPHUS:
Well, the Winged Fury has been sighted again. Hovering over the bodies of the walking dead.

CLEON: (fearful)
Don't talk about it! (PAUSE) Near the walking dead? Could it be what's causing the plague?

TELEPHUS:
I don't know.

CLEON:
I pay you to know! (SIGHS) Sorry, Telephus. I'm tired. Of this war, of the unruly people, of aliens, of...(SOFT) My pursuer.

TELEPHUS:
Aristophanes?

CLEON: (forced laugh)
No, not him. Freedom of speech is vital for our democracy. By all means he should publicly humiliate me at the festival. Let him say what he likes!

TELEPHUS:
I could find out what he's going to say, my lord.

CLEON:
No. (PAUSE) Could you?

TELEPHUS:
Of course, my lord.

FX: TELEPHUS GOES OUT.

CLEON: (laughs to himself)
Doesn't really matter. He's just one more problem. Among so many.

FX: DISTANT ECHOES OF A BATTLEFIELD IN HIS HEAD.

CLEON: (gasps in pain)
Why do you haunt me, Fury? Ever since the battle at Amphipolis... (*Amf-ip-oh-lis*) Leave... me... alone!

FX: A BUZZING GROWS OVER THE SCREAMS OF WAR

SCENE 11. THE STREETS/THE AGORA.

FX: A BUSTLING MARKETPLACE. GRAIN, GOATS AND SLAVES - EVERYTHING'S FOR SALE AND EVERYONE'S HAGGLING.

FX: CISYPUS PASSES, MUMBLING ("DIE-DIE-DIE")

LYSISTRATA:
Shouldn't we help him, Master?

SLAVE TRADER:
Oh leave him alone. Just another walking deadman. The Fury will come for him in a bit. You'll see...

FX: CISYPHUS WANDERS ON. MUMBLING. THE NOISE OF THE AGORA FADES AS HE REACHES A QUIET STREET.

FX: A SINISTER BUZZING GROWS.

CISYPHUS:
Die...Die...Die...

FX: WITH A CRY, CISYPHUS IS DROWNED OUT BY THE BUZZING.

SCENE 12. THEATRE.

ARISTOPHANES:
… And this, Doctor, is when the wine flasks start singing about how useless Cleon is.

THE DOCTOR:
Oh, singing wine flasks again?

FX: TYRGIUS COMES IN.

TYRGIUS:
Excuse me, sir. I'm a big fan.

ARISTOPHANES:
Well hello. Really?

TYRGIUS:
It is Euripides, isn't it?

ARISTOPHANES: (groans)
Yes. The finest tragedian that ever lived. I'm just rehearsing my dancing wine.

TYRGIUS:
Oh. Forgive me, sir, but this seems more like one of those awful comedies by...

ARISTOPHANES:
Ha! Got you! I'm Aristophanes, the comedian. At your service.

TYRGIUS:
I've... (SIGHS) Got it wrong again.

ARISTOPHANES:
Yes, you have rather.

TYRGIUS:
Sorry. I'm Tyrgius of Nephelokokkygia (*Neff-ello-cock-edge-ia*). I'm here on holiday.

ARISTOPHANES:
In Athens? During war and plague? Where did you say you were from? Nephelokokkygia? Cloud Cuckoo Land?

TYRGIUS: (halting)
Well....

ARISTOPHANES:
Doctor?

THE DOCTOR:
Yes. Definitely an alien.

TYRGIUS:
I don't know what you mean...

THE DOCTOR:
Thought so.

TYRGIUS:
But what have I got wrong? My telegenic disguise doesn't seem to be working very well.

ARISTOPHANES:
Little tip - We Greeks are handsome folk, Tyrgius, but not even our finest look like you.

TYRGIUS:
I'm too good-looking?

ARISTOPHANES:
Sometimes it requires a comedian to tell the truth that no-one else can. Young man, you are far too gorgeous.

TYRGIUS:
Oh dear. That would explain the furora in the agora.

ARISTOPHANES:
Uh huh. Keep away from my cast, would you? They're already dropping like flies. The last thing I need is a lovesick suicide.

TYRGIUS:
I can't get anything right. I didn't come on one of the organised tours. I'm a traveller, not a tourist. I wanted to experience the real Athens. To learn Tragedy at the hem of Euripides and study Philosophy at the feet of Socrates.

ARISTOPHANES:
Tell Socrates I sent you. He does a one-day package for aliens. All the hits – ideal forms, shadow on the cave, and (GRITS TEETH) why Athens should exile playwrights.

Now, come my friend. Stay and watch the rehearsal. So much still to do... (CALLS) Wineskins, prepare to dance!

TYRGIUS:
Perhaps I'll leave you to it.

ARISTOPHANES:
(MUTTERS) Tourists! Typical, absolutely typical.

FX: TYRGIUS WALKS AWAY. IN THE DISTANCE, WINE SKINS MUTTER AS THEY START TO SING.

TYRGIUS: (walking away)
I can't get anything right. I just wanted to fit in, to help...

TELEPHUS:
Excuse me, my friend, excuse me!

TYRGIUS:
No thank you, I'm really not interested.

TELEPHUS:
But...

TYRGIUS:
I don't need a tour guide and I don't want to buy a vase.

TELEPHUS:
My friend -

TYRGIUS:
And I'm sure your unmarried sister is very nice, but no thank you.

TELEPHUS:
You don't understand me, my friend. (HARD) I would like you to meet my master. Cleon, Ruler of Athens.

TYRGIUS:
Oh dear.

SCENE 13. ABOVE THE THEATRE.

FX: IN THE DISTANCE, REHEARSAL SOUNDS FROM THE STAGE.

HECTOR:
You okay, Ace?

ACE:
Strictly speaking, I should be asking you that.

HECTOR:
I'm fine. You?

ACE:
Fine.

HECTOR:
Yeah.

THEY LAUGH.

HECTOR:
It's just -

ACE:
Yeah -

HECTOR:
Sit around, he says. Mysterious plague, monsters... and he wants us to watch grown men dance around as wine bottles. I don't get it. I've seen funnier stuff on BBC Three.

ACE:
Maybe we're missing something in translation.

HECTOR:
Athens? I don't see what the fuss is about.

ACE:
No. I don't get to be in the play. I don't even get to watch it. Cos, guess what, woman.

HECTOR:
Well, you are the weaker sex. Woah, stay back!

FX: THEY FIGHT, LAUGHING LIKE FRIENDS. SUDDEN, AWKWARD ROMANTIC PAUSE.

HECTOR:
Ace...?

ACE:
Yeah?

SEXY PAUSE.

FX: ENTER THE DOCTOR.

THE DOCTOR:
Not interrupting anything, am I?

ACE & HECTOR:
No.

ACE:
How are rehearsals going?

THE DOCTOR:
Aristophanes has done it again.

HECTOR:
That bad, eh?

THE DOCTOR:
Maybe it'll be all right on the night. Or the night after. (PAUSE) So, I was wondering... there's a mystery here.

ACE:
Finally!

THE DOCTOR:
Hector, shall we go and investigate?

ACE:
Oh, what?!?

THE DOCTOR:
Best you stay out of trouble.

ACE:
Cos I'm a woman?

THE DOCTOR:
Because I need you to keep an eye on Aristophanes, Ace. Please.

ACE:
In case he does something funny?

THE DOCTOR: No, there’s no danger of that. But there's something going on here I don't like....

SCENE 14. CLEON'S PALACE

CLEON:
Throw him down there.

FX: TYRGIUS IS BROUGHT IN STRUGGLING AND THROWN TO THE GROUND BY GUARDS

TYRGIUS:
Why are you doing this? I'm just a visitor!

CLEON:
You're an alien. And I am Cleon, Ruler of Athens.

TYRGIUS: (groans)
I know who you are. Your guards were rough.

CLEON:
They're about to get rougher.

TYRGIUS: (to himself)
This is turning out to be a dreadful holiday.

FX: A SUDDEN BUZZING. ECHOES OF WAR. CLEON MOANS.

TYRGIUS:
Are you all right?

CLEON: (snaps)
Yes! I'm fine (BREATH) Let's have a look at you. Well, my guards haven't spoiled your looks.

TYRGIUS: (groans)
Oh no, not you too.

CLEON:
Save it, alien. I need your help.

TYRGIUS:
How?

CLEON:
Your kind disgusts me. You come to gawp at the splendours of Athens. But you don't notice that I'm... that we're tired. This city's falling apart and everyone blames me. I've done all I can, but I can't win – the Spartans are coming and there's nothing more I can do. Unless... you help me.

TYRGIUS:
Me?

CLEON:
Yes, alien. Weapons. You must have something.

TYRGIUS:
No. Even if I did, I couldn't.

CLEON:
So you'd rather just watch the Slaughter Of Athens? A good story for your holiday? Tourists!

TYRGIUS:
Why not just make peace with them?

CLEON:
Peace with the Spartans? Never!

FX: CLEON STRIKES TYRGIUS. BUZZING AND SPARKS

TYRGIUS:
Arg... I think you've broken something.

CLEON:
(STRIKES AGAIN) You won't help me?

TYRGIUS: (pain)
I can't. I'm sorry.

CLEON:
You're not the only alien in Athens. But you can be a warning to the others. Guards! Break him, like I'll break the lot of them.

FX: VIOLENCE BY GUARDS. LOW BUZZING SPARKING NOISE.

TYRGIUS:
Something's wrong. No please, don't!

FX: VIOLENCE. TYRGIUS'S CRIES AS HE IS DRAGGED AWAY. SPARKS. MERGING INTO THE SOUNDS OF BATTLE. AND A TERRIBLE BUZZING.

CLEON: (whimpering)
The sounds of war... they won't stop. My Fury, leave me alone!

SCENE 15. GREEK STREET.

FX: QUIETER THAN THE AGORA. JUST THE OCCASIONAL DOG, GOAT OR CHICKEN. SANDY PAVEMENT.

HECTOR:
You made that thing up, didn't you? About there being something odd in the theatre?

THE DOCTOR:
Perhaps. Athens... this city's not really the place for Ace. Not at the moment. Now Mel, she fitted in. She corrected Euclid's geometry. (PAUSE) Well, she fitted in. Apart from when she corrected Euclid's geometry.

HECTOR:
Is that what history's about? Fitting in?

THE DOCTOR:
Not just that. It's about knowing what you can and can't interfere with.

HECTOR:
Plague of Zombies?

THE DOCTOR:
Maybe.

HECTOR:
Flying beetles?

THE DOCTOR:
Also maybe.

HECTOR:
But not the Spartans?

THE DOCTOR:
No. They're part of history. Off limits. They're unstoppable – like Daleks with good hair.

HECTOR:
Really?

THE DOCTOR:
All curls and ringlets. Remind me of Wham. Or do I mean One Direction? Is that more your era?

HECTOR:
Don't try so hard. So what's gonna happen – when the Spartans rock up? They'll wipe the city out, won't they?

THE DOCTOR MAKES AN AWKWARD NOISE

HECTOR:
So really, we're just wasting time with your mate Aristophanes when we could be saving lives?

THE DOCTOR:
You think fighting's more important than art?

HECTOR:
Of course.

THE DOCTOR:
Hex wouldn't.

HECTOR:
No?

THE DOCTOR:
I'm sorry. I didn’t mean to imply -

HECTOR:
Mr Perfect strikes again.

THE DOCTOR: (lying)
Different. What I mean [is] -

FX: GROANING AS ZOMBIES APPROACH (“DIE...DIE...DIE...”)

HECTOR:
Doctor!

THE DOCTOR:
Hector, I'm sorry, I should really have said-

HECTOR:
Doctor, not now! We have company.

FX: GROANING ZOMBIES APPROACH

THE DOCTOR:
Oh dear.

SCENE 16. SPARTAN CAMP

ACE:
So, there we have it. The eve of battle. Night draws in on the city of Athens. The last night. Its people look out and they worry. For, somewhere out there, the Spartans are coming. And there's no stopping the Spartans, is there?

FX: LAUGHTER

ACE:
The Doctor and Hector, they're off solving mysteries and having adventures. And what of Ace? Well, she's just a girl. So she doesn't get to do anything. Because, girls. They're not important.

FX: MORE LAUGHTER

ACE:
Only...

SCENE 17. MARKETPLACE

FX: THE AGORA AGAIN. THE SLAVE GIRL LYSISTRATA CRIES OUT IN PAIN.

ACE:
Oi, you leave her alone!

SLAVE TRADER:
Get out of it! She's just a slave!

ACE:
Right then. Hello. She is a person. She's got rights.

SLAVE TRADER:
No she hasn't.

ACE:
Oh shaddup, I'll deal with you in a minute. (to LYSISTRATA) Hi.

LYSISTRATA:
Hello? Why are you helping – (me?)

ACE:
We're both women. We're as strong as they are, as clever as they are, and, let's face it, we look way better in a toga than they do. And, as I'm about to show you, we're great at fighting. Be right back. (TO TRADER) Where were we? Ah yes. Your teeth.

SLAVE TRADER:
What about them?

FX: ACE PUNCHES HIM.

ACE:
Oh look. I've invented dentistry. No, don't thank me. Now, are you going to hand me your keys?

SLAVE TRADER: (PAIN)
Who are you?

ACE:
Germaine Greer. Keys.

SLAVE TRADER:
No. Why, you....

FX: HE RUSHES ACE. SHE HITS HIM AGAIN. GRABS KEYS.

ACE:
Thanks for the keys. Here you go... er, what's your name?

LYSISTRATA:
Lysistrata.

ACE:
Grab these keys, Lysistrata, free the other slaves and scarper.

LYSISTRATA:
Thank you. Look out, Germaine Greer! Guards!

ACE:
Why – what? Ow!

FX: ACE IS KNOCKED TO THE GROUND BY GUARDS

GUARD:
Good news, alien. You're next to see Cleon.

SCENE 18. SPARTAN CAMP

ACE:
And so ended the movement for equal rights. But whatabout the Doctor and Hector, eh? After all, the streets of Athens are a dangerous place at night...

FX: LAUGHTER

SCENE 19. GREEK STREET

FX: GENTLE MURMURING OF ZOMBIES

HECTOR:
These zombies are weird.

THE DOCTOR:
And not mindless. That's not quite right. It's like they're... they're... waiting for a signal.

FX: MUMBLING OF ZOMBIES

HECTOR:
Er, Doctor, I don't like the way they're coming towards us.

THE DOCTOR:
Fascinating.

HECTOR:
Not creepy?

THE DOCTOR: (hesitates)
Slightly creepy. But mostly fascinating.

HECTOR:
Have you ever seen a horror movie?

THE DOCTOR:
Well no. Never had the time.

FX: ZOMBIES MOVE CLOSER.

THE DOCTOR: How are you at running?

HECTOR:
Used to be the champion at sprinting from the Woolworths Pic N' Mix.

THE DOCTOR:
I miss that shop. (SIGHS) When I say run, run. Run!

FX: ZOMBIES ADVANCE (“DIE-DIE-DIE”)

SCENE 20. THE CELLS

DIONYSOS:
When madness spreads through the city, it normally means only one thing. A god has come to town.

CLEON:
You're no god.

DIONYSOS:
You think not, Cleon?

CLEON:
You're just another alien. I'll do to you what I did to all the others...

SCENE 21. CLEON'S PALACE.

FX: ACE IS THROWN IN.

CLEON:
So, you're the girl alien?

ACE:
And you are?

CLEON:
I am Cleon, ruler of Athens.

ACE:
Good for you. I'm Ace.

CLEON:
I'm not interested in your name. Only in that of your owner.

ACE:
Owner? You really don't get women, do you?

CLEON:
I tolerate you aliens so long as you fit in. I can't have you giving women ideas. Whatever next? Will you be liberating furniture? Granting chickens the vote?

ACE:
If women are so helpless, how come it’s taking three of your guards to hold me down?

CLEON: (caught)
I don’t have to answer to you.

ACE:
You're not a leader – just a bully.

CLEON:
Girl, if you are so strong, will you help me save Athens?

ACE:
Help you? Forget it, I’ve got better things to do with my time, boy.

CLEON: Very well. You can’t say I didn’t give you a chance.

FX: CLEON PICKS UP A PIECE OF BROKEN POTTERY

CONTINUES ON NEXT PAGE

CLEON:
Normally, we do this once a year. But you're lucky. I'm putting on an extra one-off performance. What happens is this. The people write down the name of someone they really can't stand on an ostraka (*Oss- trar - car*)- this bit of broken pot. Then the person with the most votes is ostracised from Athens. Handy way of getting rid of rivals. Did you say your name was Ace?

FX: CLEON SCRIBBLES. THROWS POTTERY TO THE FLOOR.

CLEON:
Congratulations, Ace. You're now banished from Athens.

ACE:
What?

CLEON:
You wouldn't help me. So you're of no use to the city. Guards, throw her outside. Leave her to the mercy of the Spartans.

ACE:
You can't! What about my friends!

CLEON:
I'll get to them. Oh, and one last thing – the Spartans have no mercy.

FX: ACE IS CARRIED OUT STRUGGLING.

SCENE 22. GREEK STREET

FX: ZOMBIES GRUNTING. HECTOR AND THE DOCTOR RUNNING.

HECTOR:
The zombies are gaining on us.

THE DOCTOR:
Yes. (CALLS OUT) Help! Can anyone help?

FX: DOORS RATTLED.

HECTOR:
They've bolted their doors. The city doesn't want to know.

THE DOCTOR:
This was supposed to be a fun trip into history.

HECTOR:
Does anything ever work out like you planned it?

THE DOCTOR:
I'll get back to you on that.

FX: RUNNING. ZOMBIE GRUNTING. A SUDDEN WHIRR OF BLADES.

HECTOR:
Er, Doctor, what is that?

THE DOCTOR:
Umm.

HECTOR:
It's just – and I don't want to make a bad day worse - but it looks like a giant beetle.

THE DOCTOR:
Yes.

HECTOR:
I thought giant prawns were bad enough. But that's a giant beetle.

THE DOCTOR:
You've said that.

FX: WINGS AND BUZZING LOUDER

HECTOR:
Flying towards us.

THE DOCTOR:
You've left out the bit about its wings.

HECTOR:
Yeah. They look like huge knives, don't they?

THE DOCTOR:
That's because they are huge knives. RUN!

FX: SWISH! WHICKERSNAP OF BLADES, THE GIANT BEETLE BEARS DOWN ON THEM.

FX: THE DOCTOR AND HECTOR SCREAM.

EPISODE TWO

SCENE 23. SPARTAN CAMP

ACE:
Now, where were we?

FX: CHANGE OF ATMOSPHERE

DIONYSOS:
This is it, Cleon. The long night before the dawn of the new God. And something else is coming for you, Cleon...

CLEON:
My Fury! No! Keep it away from me!

FX: BACK TO FIRESIDE

ACE:
Oh yes, Cleon, evil leader of rubbish Athens had thrown me outside the city walls, to the Spartans...

LAUGHTER

ACE:
If I remember, that went something like...

SCENE 24. THE WALLS OF ATHENS

ACE HITS THE GROUND WITH A THUD. BIG CITY GATES SLAM.

ACE:
Oi! Let me back in! Hey! When the Doctor finds out about this, he'll make you wish you'd never been born.

GUARD: (distant)
Get out of it! Go on!

FX: ROCKS THROWN. ACE GASPS.

ACE:
All right, all right. No need to chuck rocks at me. I'm going.

FX: MORE ROCKS THROWN.

ACE:
I said I'm off. So long Athens. Walking away now!

FX: ROCK THROWING SUBSIDES.

ACE:
Just one more thing... VOTES FOR WOMEN!

FX: ACE RUNS. ROCKS THROWN.

SCENE 25. SPARTAN CAMPSIDE.

ACE:
So, there I was, all on my own, at the mercy of barbarians.

LAUGHTER

ACE:
But yeah, things aren't looking good for Athens either, are they?

VOICES: “No!” AND LAUGHTER.

ACE:
And what about the Doctor and Hector, eh? Good question...

SCENE 26. GREEK STREET.

FX: A WHIRRING OF STEEL WINGS AS THE GIANT BEETLE FLIES DOWN ON THE DOCTOR AND HECTOR. THEY CRY OUT.

THE DOCTOR:
It's a dead end!

HECTOR:
Have you got a torch you can shine at it?

THE DOCTOR:
It's! Not! A! Moth!

FX: BUZZZZZZZ! SNICK! SNICK!

THE DOCTOR:
It's coming for us!

HECTOR: (deep breath)
Okay, mate. I'm going to stand and face you. I could do with a rolled-up newspaper. A really big one. As it is, nah. It's just me. Standing my ground. Hello Death. Again.

FX: BUZZZ....uzzz... uzzz.

TYRGIUS: (WITH VOICE EFFECT)
Hello. Sorry. I hope I didn't alarm you.

HECTOR:
Doctor, the beetle's speaking to me.

THE DOCTOR:
Yes, yes it is. Hello, how do you do? I'm the Doctor.

TYRGIUS:
We've met.

THE DOCTOR:
Oh dear. Did I, um, by any chance thwart your invasion plans?

TYRGIUS:
Nope. We met about an hour ago. In the theatre. I'm Tyrgius.

THE DOCTOR:
Oh I see! You looked different.

TYRGIUS:
I was wearing my telegenic mask. Hold on.

FX: SPARKLING SOUND AS HIS MASK IS ENGAGED.

TYRGIUS: (NO VOICE EFFECT)
Better?

HECTOR:
Yeah. Much. Why weren't you wearing that just now?

TYRGIUS:
For flying? Wouldn't that have looked a bit odd? And besides, it's not working as well as it should. Not since my encounter with Cleon earlier.

THE DOCTOR:
Oh.

TYRGIUS:
Well, with Cleon's fists, really. He doesn't like aliens. He explained this to me quite forcefully.

THE DOCTOR:
I'm fascinated by your mask – can I have a look? Ah yes – telepathic projector. Makes people see you as you want them to.

TYRGIUS:
The perfect disguise. Well, should be. If it was still working, but it keeps -

FX: BZZK! SPARKING SOUND. THE DOCTOR CRIES OUT.

HECTOR:
Die! Die! Die! Stop it please! (RETCHING NOISE)

FX: BZZZK! SPARKING SOUND.

TYRGIUS: (VOICE EFFECT BACK ON)
… doing that. I'm sorry if that discomforted you.

HECTOR: (shaken)
No worries.

THE DOCTOR: (flustered)
What was that?

TYRGIUS:
Subconscious buffer overrun. Picking up and amplifying the city's background fears. Dampening filter's been playing up for a while, but I think Cleon's heavies have finally broken it. Which could be quite, um, dangerous.

THE DOCTOR:
Come back to the theatre and I'll take a look at it...

SCENE 27. OUTSIDE ATHENS.

ACE: (narrating)
Meanwhile, outside the city, a young woman was taking her exile nobly...

ACE: (distant, coming closer, muttering angrily)
You know what you are, Athens? You're rubbish. You can keep your philosophy and your poems and your maths.

No wonder the Spartans have got it in for you – you're a bunch of snobby sexist slave traders run by a bully.

And, for another thing, it's really cold at night.

(SIGHS)

I could go on like this for hours.

Problem is, I've not got hours. If my luck holds, someone'll try and kill me in a minute. They'll have proper swords. What have I got? A rucksack. (THINKS) Oh...

FX: THWACK OF AN ARROW.

ACE:
That was close! Hello? Is that the Spartans? You hear me? My name's Ace, and... I'm not … afraid... of you...

MOCKING LAUGHTER ECHOES.

SCENE 28. THE THEATRE

FX: DOCTOR ENTERS ACCOMPANIED BY BUZZING FLYING BEETLE.

ARISTOPHANES:
Doctor, there you are! I was wondering if you had some money for... – oh good heavens. A giant beetle!

HECTOR:
Yup.

THE DOCTOR:
This is Tyrgius. Remember him?

ARISTOPHANES:
The pretty one?

TYRGIUS: (STILL WITH VOICE EFFECT)
Hello again.

ARISTOPHANES:
You came amongst us disguised like Zeus on a romantic date?

TYRGIUS:
Well...

HECTOR:
Only his mask's on the blink. Here -

FX: MASK PASSED

ARISTOPHANES:
What a thing of beauty!

TYRGIUS:
Do you like it? I had it customised to look like a player's mask of Dionysos.

ARISTOPHANES:
Oh yes! What does it do?

HECTOR:
If it was working, it could make people think whatever you wanted them to.

ARISTOPHANES:
So, if I wore it, I could make people think my plays were actually funny?

TYRGIUS:
It has its limits.

THE DOCTOR:
Anyway, Tyrgius, we can't have you raising eyebrows. I'll just get some tools from my ship. Back in a mo.

FX: THE DOCTOR LEAVES.

HECTOR:
So, Aristophanes, you're pretty cool about aliens visiting Athens?

ARISTOPHANES:
You get used to it. In the old days, the Gods were always popping in for a feed and a ravish. Aliens? They're not so different.

TYRGIUS:
When you put it like that...

ARISTOPHANES:
But a beetle! Dear sir, you are remarkable.

TYRGIUS:
Thank you.

HECTOR:
Mind you, what were you doing flying around at night?

TYRGIUS:
Visiting the plague victims.

ARISTOPHANES:
There have been reports of a winged creature seen near them. It was thought it was one of the Furies hurrying their souls to Hades.

TYRGIUS:
No. Just me.

HECTOR:
Why?

TYRGIUS:
Busman's holiday. I'm a xenopsychosurgeon.

HECTOR:
A what now?

ARISTOPHANES: (patient)
It's all Greek. Xeno = other, Psyche = spirit. Surgeon = good with his hands.

TYRGIUS:
I mend people.

HECTOR:
Ah. A paramedic.

TYRGIUS:
I've tried my best with the plague victims, but something's not right.

SCENE 29. CLEON'S PALACE.

DIONYSOS: (narrating)
Meanwhile, in his palace, there was news for the Tyrant of Athens...

FX: ENTER TELEPHUS. AT A RUN. AGAIN.

TELEPHUS:
My Lord Cleon!

CLEON: (sighs)
It's been a long night, Tyrgius.

TELEPHUS:
The Winged Fury has been seen entering the Theatre of Dionysos.

CLEON:
Aristophanes! I knew he'd be behind it. You remember when he insulted Athens in front of visiting aliens?

TELEPHUS:
He was very rude about you, my Lord.

CLEON:
Oh, that wasn't important [IT WAS]. He brought the city into disrepute. No alternative but to prosecute. Couldn't get him for treason then, but this time I will. Telephus, get down to the theatre. I want Aristophanes' head on a plate.

TELEPHUS:
Before this year's performance?

CLEON:
Before breakfast. Go!

FX: TELEPHUS GOES OUT. AS HE LEAVES THE ECHOES OF BATTLE COME IN.

CLEON: (musing)
So, Aristophanes, you're behind my persecution? The dreams that won't stop... the killing? Do you really hate me that much?

SCENE 30. THEATRE.

FX: THE DOCTOR IS SOLDERING THE MASK

THE DOCTOR:
Hector – this mask is fascinating. The circuitry is a miracle of solid state micro-welding.

HECTOR: (disinterested)
Yeah, great. Where's Ace?

THE DOCTOR:
Oh, I'm sure she's around...

HECTOR:
Doctor, this is important. She's missing.

THE DOCTOR:
Yes, yes, just finishing these repairs. With you in a minute.

HECTOR:
Sure...

FX: HECTOR WALKS AWAY. WE HEAR ARISTOPHANES TALKING TO TYRGIUS...

ARISTOPHANES:
And then, turns out he's married his own daughter. Hilarious ending!

TYRGIUS:
Umm.

ARISTOPHANES: (coughs)
Perhaps you had to be there.

TYRGIUS GROANS IN PAIN.

HECTOR:
Hey, are you all right, Tyrgius?

TYRGIUS:
Not really... My left brains hurt terribly. That mask can be quite tiring. And thanks to Cleon and his war, my services have been in demand. So many injured, so much pain.

ARISTOPHANES:
The man is a monster, no offence. We grew up together. He was a nasty little boy.

HECTOR:
What's he like now?

ARISTOPHANES:
Still a nasty little boy. Is that fair?

TYRGIUS:
Perhaps I caught him on a bad day.

ARISTOPHANES:
It's always a bad day with Cleon. He's filled Athens with cronies and spies – it’s because of him we're still at war with Sparta. He doesn't want to lose face by ending it. As my play will demonstrate to the whole city.

HECTOR:
Right. Sure it will.

ARISTOPHANES:
You don't sound convinced.

HECTOR:
Look, have either of you seen Ace? My friend? We left her here earlier.

ARISTOPHANES:
Oh... her. Your slave girl.

HECTOR SPLUTTERS.

ARISTOPHANES:
I sent her out to do some shopping. Told her to keep the change. (CONFIDENTIALLY) After all, the Doctor's paying.

HECTOR:
Where?

ARISTOPHANES:
In the agora. Second left.

HECTOR:
Thanks.

ARISTOPHANES:
Don't worry. She'll come back. Slave girls normally do. And, hey, if not, we'll buy you another one.

HECTOR:
Happy with the one I've got, cheers.

FX: AS HECTOR WALKS AWAY, ARISTOPHANES IS TALKING

ARISTOPHANES:
So, anyway, Tyrgius, we're an actor short. Don't suppose you'd care to...?

TYRGIUS:
No!

SCENE 31. OUTSIDE THE THEATRE.

FX: AS HECTOR WALKS OUT THROUGH A GATE, HE IS OBSERVED.

HECTOR:
Yeah, I'm sure Ace'll be fine.

TELEPHUS:
Good sir, excuse me. Did I just see you come out of the Theatre of Dionysos?

HECTOR:
What of it?

TELEPHUS:
Is Aristophanes in there? Huge fan. I don't suppose... you have any spoilers about this year's comedy?

HECTOR:
You're a spy, aren't you?

TELEPHUS:
no.

HECTOR:
Come on.

TELEPHUS:
might be.

HECTOR:
Good. Then listen - my friend Ace has gone missing. You'd know what happened to her? She's a visitor. Young. Pretty. Not wearing a toga. Has your boss abducted her?

TELEPHUS:
I can assure you, my friend, I know nothing. She may well just have got lost. Athens is a large city.

HECTOR:
Exactly. And apparently you spies are everywhere, so maybe you can ask around. Find her for me, eh?

TELEPHUS:
I would be only too happy to. I can put out the word right now. But, perhaps, in return....

HECTOR:
What do you want?

CONTINUES ON NEXT PAGE

TELEPHUS:
My boss, Cleon, you understand... he hates being mocked by Aristophanes. Every year. People can be so hurtful. He'd just like to know... in advance, what's planned. That's all. Not stop it - just brace himself.

HECTOR:
It so happens, I know a way you can find out.

TELEPHUS:
Do you?

HECTOR:
Yeah. Don't suppose you've ever fancied yourself as an actor?

TELEPHUS: (thinks)
My friend, the one thing actors have in common with spies - We both lie for a living.

SCENE 32. THEATRE STAGE.

FX: TYRGIUS GIVES A GROAN AND A BUZZ.

TYRGIUS:
Oh dear. I'm not feeling too...[well]

FX: TYRGIUS SUBSIDES INTO FEEBLE BUZZING AND FALLS DOWN.

ARISTOPHANES: (calling)
Doctor! Your bug friend's passed out. I swear I didn't hit him with my shoe.

THE DOCTOR: (running)
Tyrgius? Tyrgius... It's psychic shock. (MUTTERS) Something's badly wrong with that mask.

FX: HECTOR COMES IN WITH TELEPHUS

HECTOR:
Mister Aristophanes, I've- Oh.

TELEPHUS:
What Is That Thing?!?!? Is that the Winged Fury?

ARISTOPHANES:
Erm. It's just a prop for my play. Er, the hero flies to heaven on a giant beetle. Yes.

TELEPHUS: (suspicious)
A giant beetle? It's twitching.

ARISTOPHANES:
All done with hidden wires. Marvellous prop. And you are?

TELEPHUS:
I'm an actor. Your friend Hector here told me you're looking for one.

ARISTOPHANES:
Oh I am! My dear sir. How wonderful. Owe anyone money?

TELEPHUS:
No.

ARISTOPHANES:
Ever been in a play by Euripides?

TELEPHUS:
No.

ARISTOPHANES:
You're hired. Come over here and I'll give you a script. I've a costume for a Dancing Wine Flask that'll fit you like a glove.

FX: THEY MOVE AWAY.

HECTOR:
Is Tyrgius all right, Doctor?

THE DOCTOR:
Even when he's not wearing it, that mask's still draining mental energy from him. I think this is a healing coma.

HECTOR:
Can you repair the mask?

THE DOCTOR:
Oh, it's mended. Mostly. Works by rewriting the thoughts of anyone in the surrounding area. Fascinating really.

HECTOR:
Yeah, yeah. Can we find Ace now?

THE DOCTOR:
What?!?

HECTOR:
Ace. She's gone missing.

THE DOCTOR:
Why didn't you tell me? Wait, you did, didn't you, and I didn't pay any attention...

HECTOR:
Yeah.

THE DOCTOR:
Sorry.

HECTOR:
Apparently she went to the Agora.

FX: THEY MOVE OFF. IN THE DISTANCE...

ARISTOPHANES:
Hey presto, you're a singing jug of wine! Marvellous!

TELEPHUS:
Ummm...

SCENE 33. THE AGORA.

FX: THE DOCTOR AND HECTOR WALK INTO A SCENE OF BUSTLE.

THE DOCTOR:
Excuse me!

SLAVE TRADER:
Yeah?

HECTOR:
Have you seen our friend Ace?

SLAVE TRADER:
Dressed a bit funny? Rude?

HECTOR:
Yeah.

SLAVE TRADER:
No. (SNIFFS) Unless....

THE DOCTOR:
Here, noble trader, are some coins.

FX: JINGLE OF COINS

SLAVE TRADER:
Much obliged, sir. Your friend, was she called Germaine Gree?

THE DOCTOR AND HECTOR:
Yes.

SLAVE TRADER:
Well, she had a look around, didn't buy anything. Went away. Peacefully.

HECTOR:
Anything more?

SLAVE TRADER:
No.

THE DOCTOR:
Thank you. Come along, Hector.

HECTOR:
How did you do the thing with the coins?

THE DOCTOR:
Produce them from my mouth?

HECTOR:
Yeah. Neat trick.

THE DOCTOR:
Not at all. It's where the Greeks keep their small change.

HECTOR:
Euw.

THE DOCTOR:
They invented the coin before they invented the purse. Or the pocket. Imagine that – the Ancient Greeks have a term for The Ideological Sublime Of The Soul but nothing for Pocket Fluff.

HECTOR:
How do we find Ace?

THE DOCTOR:
We'll ask the stock. Dealing in slaves is a filthy business. Doesn't encourage loyalty. (OUT LOUD) What a lovely looking dancing girl! (SOFT) Excuse me – can you help?

LYSISTRATA:
The girl you were asking about?

HECTOR:
Yes.

LYSISTRATA:
I saw her. She hit my master.

THE DOCTOR:
That's Ace.

HECTOR:
What happened to her?

LYSISTRATA:
Guards came and took her away. It was quite a fight. It took three of them to hold her down.

HECTOR:
Definitely her.

LYSISTRATA:
I wish she'd come back and hit him again.

HECTOR:
We'll do our best.

FX: THEY WALK AWAY.

HECTOR:
Are we doing anything about them?

THE DOCTOR:
The slaves? Vital part of the Athenian economy.

HECTOR:
It's disgusting.

THE DOCTOR:
Comes back to bite them in the end.

HECTOR: (dubious)
So we just leave them to get beaten?

THE DOCTOR:
I'm afraid so. For the moment. Ace'll be before a jury tomorrow morning. There's nothing we can do until dawn.

SCENE 34. THEATRE STAGE.

FX: THE DOCTOR AND HECTOR WALK IN.

TELEPHUS: (SLIGHT DISTANCE, ACTING)
I say, I say, I say, what smells worse than a giant dung beetle? Cleon.

ARISTOPHANES: (APPLAUDING)
Oh very good. Splendid. Doctor, Hector – there you are. Did you find your friend?

HECTOR:
She's in prison.

ARISTOPHANES:
Never mind, eh? I say, thanks for finding Telephus – he's a marvel.

TELEPHUS:
Thank you.

ARISTOPHANES:
A natural actor. Voices, misdirection, you name it. And he does such a good Cleon you'd think he was his best friend.

HECTOR:
Ummm.

ARISTOPHANES:
My dear Telephus, with you in the cast, I may even win second prize. How about that? Provided, naturally, the Spartans don't get here first. Rotten sense of timing.

THE DOCTOR:
Oh, they're not all that bad.

HECTOR: (coughs)
Let's talk about this later shall we?

ARISTOPHANES:
Cleon just wants us to be afraid of them. Only thing keeping him in power. War makes him look good. Why, if we had peace, everyone would realise what a rubbish ruler he was.

HECTOR:
Er... he's not so evil, is he?

ARISTOPHANES:
Oh no, he's the worst. Cowardly, callous, unhygienic. He probably eats babies for breakfast.

TELEPHUS: (sharp)
Oh, really?

THE DOCTOR:
Well, his track record's not impressive. Since he came to power, tens of thousands of lives have been lost in a war with Sparta that he's needlessly prolonged through his incompetence.

HECTOR: (hiss)
Doctor, shut up!

ARISTOPHANES:
You know, we had a chance to wipe out the Persians for good. He won a vote to go to war with them, and then spent the dosh on a war with Sparta instead.

HECTOR:
(MEANINGFULLY) Let's chat about this later.

ARISTOPHANES:
While we've been squabbling with Sparta, the Persians and Macedonians (*Mass-edough-knee-annes*) have only got stronger. They'll be coming for us next, you mark my words. And the only people who could save us? Sparta. Fat chance of that. Thank you Cleon!

TELEPHUS:
Fascinating. (YAWNS) It's getting late. I've really enjoyed being a wine skin, but I really must go to bed.

ARISTOPHANES:
See you soon?

TELEPHUS: (sinister)
Oh yes. You certainly will.

ARISTOPHANES & **THE DOCTOR:**
Good night.

FX: TELEPHUS WALKS AWAY

HECTOR:
'Scuse me. Just going to say goodnight to him, outside.

FX: HECTOR SETS OFF AFTER TELEPHUS

ARISTOPHANES:
Lovely fellow.

THE DOCTOR: (INNOCENT)
Yes. And such a good listener.

SCENE 35. AGORA

FX: HECTOR IS RUNNING

HECTOR:
Telephus! Telephus! I made a mistake! Listen, I need to have a word! Damn. No sign of him.

SLAVE TRADER:
You again?

HECTOR:
Have you seen Telephus, the, er, spy?

SLAVE TRADER:
What's it to you... to you... to you... Dion... Dion... Die-Die-Die...

HECTOR:
Are you all right?

LYSISTRATA:
It's the sickness! He's got the plague. Quickly – get the keys, free us.

SLAVES:
Help us!

LYSISTRATA:
Help us – we don't want to get the plague.

HECTOR:
Sure, just give us a chance to find the keys...

FX: JANGLING OF KEYS.

SLAVES:
Help us.... help ussss... die. Die-Die-Die.

FX: THE SLAVES ALL START TO MOAN AND MURMUR.

HECTOR:
I'm too late. It's spreading.

SCENE 36. CLEON'S PALACE

CLEON:
He! Said! What?!?!?

TELEPHUS:
That you eat babies. That you're a war criminal. That we should make peace with Sparta. It's all Free Speech, of course...

CLEON HISSES

TELEPHUS:
Only, my lord, he did make these treasonable statements on the stage of Dionysos.

CLEON:
So it was technically a public performance?

TELEPHUS:
Two outsiders were present. Alien outsiders.

CLEON:
Brilliant. Actual Treason.

TELEPHUS:
Yes.

CLEON:
He's always had it in for me. Ever since we were children. Just because I was more popular than him. He was a name caller then, and he's no different now. Typical writer - jealous of everyone else's success. Well, I've nailed him now. Raid the theatre - bring 'em all here. Aristophanes can star in a tragedy. (LAUGHS) Oh, and Telephus, round up all the plague victims. Time to sweep the stables clean.

SCENE 37. GREEK STREET

LYSISTRATA:
Please! Don't leave me here to die-die-die...

FX: MOANING GROWS. FRIGHTENING. SOUND OF IRON CHAINS SNAPPING.

HECTOR:
Zombies who can snap iron. Great.

FX: ENTER GUARDS

HECTOR:
Hey, guards! Am I glad to see you – these people need your help.

GUARD:
Not from us, they don't.

HECTOR:
What?

GUARD:
Our orders are to round them all up. Cleon's new directive.

HECTOR:
And take them where? Hospital?

GUARD: (shrugs)
Drive them into the Theatre of Dionysos. And set fire to it.

HECTOR:
No. You can't! They're just sick, that's all.

GUARD:
Orders. The city must be kept pure. (TO GUARDS) Come on you lot, let's shift em.

FX: GUARDS ADVANCE ON MUTTERING ZOMBIES.

HECTOR:
Right, Doctor. That's it. Enough about putting on your stupid play. This city's in a right mess. Someone's got to sort it out.

SCENE 38. THE THEATRE

FX: AN EERIE ECHO. SILENCE.

THE DOCTOR: (echo)
Aristophanes? Hello?

TELEPHUS:
The Theatre's empty. He's gone, Doctor.

THE DOCTOR:
Gone, Telephus? Gone where?

TELEPHUS:
Cleon's men came. They arrested him for treason.

THE DOCTOR:
What? Nonsense!

TELEPHUS:
He and his co-conspirators were planning on betraying the city to Sparta.

THE DOCTOR:
Really? Who said all this? Take me to Cleon! I'll set the record straight.

TELEPHUS:
Gladly. (WHISTLES) Guards!

THE DOCTOR:
What? What are you doing -

TELEPHUS:
) *I* was the one who told Cleon, Doctor. You see, I work for him. I’m a spy.

THE DOCTOR:
Oh.

SCENE 39. CLEON'S PALACE

FX: SOUNDS OF A GREEK PLAYWRIGHT BEING THROWN TO THE FLOOR

ARISTOPHANES:
Cleon... do you really hate me this much?

CLEON:
The city hates you, not me. For your treachery.

ARISTOPHANES:
I'm no traitor. I believe in Athens, in the amazing things this City has given the world. People come from the heavens to marvel at us.

CLEON:
You conspire with them all, don't you? You would have Sparta overrun us!

ARISTOPHANES:
No! I just want an end to this war.

CLEON:
You think I don't?

ARISTOPHANES:
No. You've let so many die... the people we grew up with.

CLEON:
That's war. You think this job's easy? You want to try it? Have my seat. Athens is yours. Go On!

ARISTOPHANES: (awkward)
I don't... I'm not sure...

CLEON:
The great playwright, lost for words. Fine. Carry on writing your nasty little plays. You've never achieved anything and you never will.

ARISTOPHANES:
I've made people happy. The grieving, the frightened, the orphaned. I've made them laugh. (PAUSE) On a good day. (SIGHS)

CLEON:
You've done more than that. You sent a Fury to madden me! Haven't you?

ARISTOPHANES:
What?

SCENE 40. THEATRE OF DIONYSOS

FX: EMPTY AND ECHOING AS BEFORE. HECTOR COMES IN.

HECTOR:
Doctor, are you around? Nah, the theatre's empty. No-one here but us chickens. And, yeah, one big sleeping beetle.

FX: PRODDED BEETLE.

FX: TELEPHUS STEPS OUT FROM BEHIND THE STAGE

HECTOR:
Telephus!

TELEPHUS:
They've all gone, my friend. There's only you left.

HECTOR:
Is that so, "my friend"?

TELEPHUS:
Oh yes. I had them all rounded up. I've just been waiting for you.

HECTOR:
We have more important things to worry about. Can you hear that?

FX: DISTANT SOUND OF CRIES AND SHOUTING.

TELEPHUS:
What is that?

HECTOR:
Your man Cleon is driving the plague victims here. To slaughter them.

TELEPHUS:
Good riddance to them. They'll die... die-die-die. Oh no.

HECTOR:
Yeah. Not so funny now, is it?

TELEPHUS: (shakes head)
What's happening to me, my friend – dion... dion... DIONYSOS. Help me.

FX: DISTANT CROUD CHANTING "DIONYSOS"

HECTOR:
I can help you. But you've got to help me. Dionysos – that name you're all saying - tell me all you know about him.

TELEPHUS:
Dionysos... Dionysos...

SCENE 41. CLEON'S PALACE

CLEON:
Somehow, Aristophanes, you're behind it all, aren't you?

ARISTOPHANES:
I don't know what you're talking about.

CLEON:
You haunt my mind. Torturing me with waking dreams of battle. You sent that Fury after me.

ARISTOPHANES:
Oh, you mean.... [that beetle]

CLEON:
So you do know. I thought at much.

ARISTOPHANES:
I'm innocent. Why would I...[do that]?

CLEON:
You hate me. You want to drive me mad!

ARISTOPHANES:
I don't! It's just... Oh, what's the use? You've never listened. Not since you were a boy. Never mind. (SIGHS) Show me to my cell.

CLEON:
Don't get too comfortable. The city may fall, but I'll still make sure you and your alien friend are executed first.

SCENE 42. THE THEATRE

TELEPHUS:
And then Dionysos... he... die-die-die...

HECTOR:
It's okay, my friend. You can go. You've told me enough. It's time to sort this mess out.

FX: DISTANT MUMBLING AND CHANTING COMES CLOSER.

HECTOR:
Here they come.

TELEPHUS:
Die-die-die...

ZOMBIES:
Die-Die-Die-Dion-Dion-Dion...

HECTOR:
Now, where's that mask? Come on Tyrgius, let's shift you.

FX: SOUND OF A BIG BEETLE BEING ROCKED.

HECTOR:
Aw, come on Doctor, where'd you leave that mask?

ZOMBIES:
Diony-Diony-Diony-

HECTOR:
Got it! I hope the Doctor was right when he said he'd fixed it...

ZOMBIES:
Dionysos! Dionysos! Dionysos!

HECTOR:
Please work. That's all. Save them. Here goes.

FX: SUDDENLY HECTOR'S VOICE, BUT DIFFERENT.

DIONYSOS:
Stay back. Stop and listen. Everyone. Stop and listen. (AS HECTOR) Yes. It's working. Like it's telling me what to say.

ZOMBIES:
Tell us what to say!

DIONYSOS:
Dionysos is here. I'm Dionysos. The God of Fun. And that's just what we're going to have.

ZOMBIES:
Fun! Fun! Fun!

DIONYSOS:
Don't worry about the guards outside. Just relax, eh? Enjoy yourselves. If those guards try and come in... Dionysos says we're going to show them a good time.

ZOMBIE CHEERS:
Dionysos! Dionysos! Dionysos!

SCENE 43. CLEON'S PALACE

FX: ENTER GUARD

GUARD:
Lord Cleon! Good news! The plague victims have been driven into the Temple of Dionysos.

CLEON:
And?

GUARD:
I'm afraid the god Dionysos himself has shown up to protect them.

CLEON:
What? Oh, it's just one of Aristophanes' actors. Wearing a mask and putting on a voice.

GUARD:
But my lord... It's a miracle – all the sick – they're now singing and dancing. They're his worshippers – the Bacchae.

CLEON:
I don't care. Drag that impostor out of his theatre and throw him in a cell. He's no God. You'll see. But first, time to do something I'm really going to enjoy.

SCENE 44. THE RAMPARTS OF ATHENS

FX: A BIG STONE WALL OVERLOOKING A SLEEPING CITY

CLEON:
Good morning gentlemen. It's dawn. I love the view from the city walls. Out across Athens down to the sea. I trust you slept well.

THE DOCTOR:
I've been in worse cells.

ARISTOPHANES:
He spent most of the night talking to the rats.

THE DOCTOR:
They were very friendly.

CLEON:
While you've been singing to vermin, I've been trying to save this city. And I think I've done it. Despite your treason.

ARISTOPHANES:
Treason? We're innocent!

CLEON:
I've decided you're guilty.

THE DOCTOR:
As any tyrant would.

CLEON:
I didn't bring you up here to admire the sunrise. I've decided to exile you. From the top of the city wall. Guards!

STRUGGLING.

THE DOCTOR:
Cleon, why can't you believe that Aristophanes... he may not like you, but he's not plotting against you. I may be an alien, but I am most assuredly NOT WORKING WITH THE SPARTANS.

GUARD:
My lord! The Spartans are coming! They're marching on the city.

FX: DISCORDANT MUSICAL MARCHING OF THE SPARTANS.

CLEON:
That damned racket. So it begins. Athens' darkest dawn.

CONTINUES ON NEXT PAGE

THE DOCTOR:
Ask them if they've heard of me. They haven't. They don't know who I am. They don't care. And then, when we've cleared that up , I can help you.

ARISTOPHANES:
He can you know, he's very good.

CLEON:
All right. I will ask them!

ADONIA: (helmeted, shouting)
Cleon, Tyrant of Athens. Surrender in the Name of Sparta.

CLEON:
Spartan, do you see this man I'm about to throw off the wall?

FX: BGERK! FROM THE DOCTOR

CLEON:
Well, does anyone down there know him?

MUFFLED SOLDIER:
I do!

THE DOCTOR:
Whu?

CLEON:
Really? Step forward, Spartan!

FX: SOUND OF SOMEONE RAISING THEIR HELMET

ACE:
Hello Doctor! Don't worry. I've come to rescue you!

THE DOCTOR:
Oh dear.

EPISODE THREE

SCENE 45. CLEON'S CELL

DIONYSOS:
So. We reach the dawn of the new God.

CLEON:
I don't have time for this. You've driven us all mad. I'm beset by traitors, and the Spartans are beating at the gates.

DIONYSOS:
Sounds like exactly the time for a god. If you ask me.

CLEON:
You? An expert?

DIONYSOS:
I am Dionysos – I lead the dance. I bring freedom.

CLEON:
You're just a man in a mask. One that I can take off, like-

FX: SPARKS. CLEON CRIES OUT.

CLEON:
My head! All I can see is death! Death and madness!

DIONYSOS:
It is unwise to lay hands on a god.

CLEON:
This is just some trick. An alien trick. To take my city from me.

DIONYSOS:
A city is not a city when it is held by one man.

CLEON:
I don't have to listen to you.

DIONYSOS: (thunders)
Yes you do! (SURPRISED PAUSE) No.... no, you don't.

CLEON:
In two minds?

DIONYSOS: (shaken)
Dunno what came over me... I.... Listen, mate, it's complicated...

CONTINUES ON NEXT PAGE

CLEON: (mocking)
Do go on. “Dionysos”. If you really are a god, prove it by escaping this dungeon. Otherwise I'll burn your theatre down! You have an hour. In the meantime... I have nothing more to say to you.

FX: SLAM

DIONYSOS: (mutters)
I... (ASSERTING) I am Dionysos. I bring strength through joy.

SCENE 46: ANOTHER CELL

FX: CLEON WALKING PAST.

ARISTOPHANES:
There goes Cleon. He doesn't seem very happy.

THE DOCTOR:
Perhaps it's not much fun ruling Athens.

ARISTOPHANES:
Nonsense! He lords it over all us. Did you see his face when the Spartans turned up and denounced you? Delighted.

THE DOCTOR:
I wouldn't say that. Although, I will admit their timing was rather unfortunate....

SCENE 47. THE SPARTAN CAMP

ACE: (NARRATION)
So, the story so far. I was captured by the Spartans. They made me fight for my life. I lost... and then...

ADONIA: (removes helmet, exertion)
You fought well. For an Athenian.

ACE: (also tired)
You're a Spartan? You're a Spartan woman?

ADONIA:
We all are. Aren't we girls?

FX: CHORUS OF "YEAH"s

ACE:
But I thought you were... I mean... blokes.

ADONIA: (laughs)
Sparta does have women, you know. I am Adonia, Captain of Sparta.

ACE:
And I'm Ace of Athens. Sort of. Why are you soldiers?

ADONIA:
Because we're rubbish dancers. Seriously. All good Spartan girls dream of being a dancer. Sadly, not all of us make the grade – so we have to join the boys at fighting.

FX: ATHENIAN MUTTERING "YEAH".

ACE:
But... isn't capturing Athens too important a job...[for women]?

ADONIA:
Blimey, Ace you really are from Athens.

ACE:
Sorry. I've just got so used to-

ADONIA:
It's true what they say. The women of Athens don't think for themselves.

ACE:
I don't actually like Athens very much. There was a whole being-thrown-out and having-rocks-chucked-at me thing.

ADONIA:
Then, would you like to help us invade it?

ACE: (narration coming back into the moment)
And since then, we've got on like a house of fire. Actually, we have set a fair few things on fire. Oh yeah, I like being a Spartan.

FX: CHEERS

ACE:
True, you Spartans aren't exactly Taste The Difference, but you're certainly a very good rough and ready meal. And at least you're honest. No tyrants, no philosophers, no slaves.

ADONIA:
Isn't that right, comrades?

MORE CHEERING.

ACE:
So, we march on Athens together. (CHEERS) To bring down a tyrant. (CHEERS) To rescue my friends! (CHEERS)

FX: MUSICAL MARCH STARTS

ADONIA:
And who better than the Spartan Army? When you Athenians put on helmets you are playing a game of pretend. But when we put on a helmet we are warriors.

FX: CHEERING

ACE:
Come on ladies, let's go get em!

FX: MORE CHEERING.

SCENE 48. A CELL.

FX: A STRANGE CRY (FROM DIONYSOS) A BOLT OF LIGHTENING AND A LOUD CRASH.

ARISTOPHANES:
What the Zeus was that? It came from the cell next door.

THE DOCTOR:
Something's very wrong.

FX: HECTOR WALKING PAST.

HECTOR:
Hello Doctor, Aristophanes. How's tricks?

THE DOCTOR:
Hector, what are you doing here?

HECTOR: (Change of subject)
Fancy being rescued?

ARISTOPHANES:
Very much so.

THE DOCTOR:
Wait. It depends who by.

HECTOR:
Who do you think? Me, Hector.

THE DOCTOR:
Were you being held hostage by Cleon as well?

HECTOR:
...in a way.

THE DOCTOR:
How did you escape? What's that behind your back?

HECTOR:
Nothing.

THE DOCTOR:
Nothing looks like Tyrgius's mask.

HECTOR:
What's it to you?

THE DOCTOR: (sad)
Oh, Hector...

HECTOR:
Do you want rescuing or not?

ARISTOPHANES:
Stop questioning your friend and let him get us out.

THE DOCTOR:
Not at that price. Hector, listen to me. Don't wear that mask. You don't know what it does, how it works, or what it costs.

HECTOR:
Then tell me.

THE DOCTOR:
Your mind is still weak from the Swarm. You won't be able to control the mask. Give it to me, I'll – .

HECTOR:
No, Doctor. This city is in danger. Run by a madman! At war! Zombies everywhere... and what have you done? You could have done something about it. Instead you've just clowned around with Ben Elton here.

THE DOCTOR:
Don't wear that mask. Being a god isn't worth the price.

HECTOR: But I'll pay it. I'm just an ordinary guy, lost in history. I've no special powers. I'm not a hero like you. Maybe I can't control it. It's okay. I know it won't make me a god. But it'll make me a bit more like you. Like you should be. Someone who does something.

THE DOCTOR:
Hex!

HECTOR REACTS TO THIS. A WINCE?

THE DOCTOR: (softer)
Hector.

FX: HECTOR PUTS ON THE MASK.

DIONYSOS:
Not Hector, Dionysos. I'm going to sort Athens out. And then, yeah, after that, you can put on your panto. See you around.

FX: HE WALKS AWAY.

ARISTOPHANES:
Well, I think you could have handled that better.

THE DOCTOR:
Shut up.

ARISTOPHANES:
(BEAT) And who is Ben Elton?

SCENE 49. THE SPARTAN CAMP

ACE:
Something's wrong with the dawn. The sun's not coming up.

ADONIA:
There is something strange about this day. They say a new god walks their streets – Dionysos.

ACE:
What? Oh, I'm sick of gods. Who's this one?

ADONIA:
A typical Athenian God – the lord of drunken stupidity.

ACE:
Makes a change from being an evil from the dawn of time I suppose.

FX: MUTTERING AMONG SPARTANS.

ADONIA:
The people who once stood like living statues now run riot through the streets worshipping this new God. They are his Bacchae – they have woven ivy through their hair and they sing and chant. Soon all of Athens will join in the dance. What of you, Ace of Athens? Do you wish to join in his jig?

LAUGHTER

ACE:
No. Call me a killjoy if you like, but I think it's always fishy when Gods walk the streets.

ADONIA:
Athens has welcomed all sorts for too long. Now their city is doomed.

ACE:
But what about my friends?

ADONIA:
It may well be too late. When gods come to call, there is one thing you can be sure of – sooner or later they will demand a sacrifice.

SCENE 50. CLEON'S PALACE

FX: DISTANT BACCHIC RAMPAGE.

CLEON: (to himself, on a balcony)
Look at them. Too many for my soldiers to control. Poor mad fools, running wild, calling for their god. Whose city is this? Mine, or that prattling fool's?

FX: A KNOCK AT THE DOOR

CLEON:
What is it?

FX: DIONYSOS ENTERS

DIONYSOS:
It's Dionysos. Can I come in?

CLEON:
You! What are you doing here?

DIONYSOS:
You told me to come to you. If I escaped. Well, Cleon of Athens, I am here.

CLEON:
How? How did you get free?

DIONYSOS:
No prison can hold me. I am a god.

CLEON:
No, you're not. If you were – you'd do something about that rabble out there in the streets.

DIONYSOS: That rabble are my Bacchae. They simply celebrate the rites of Dionysos. Let me go to them. I can tame them.

CLEON:
(INTERESTED) Can you? The Spartans are coming in at any moment, and that lot are clogging the streets.

DIONYSOS:
Tell you what, Cleon. You made a bargain with me. I'll make a bargain with you. I'll send the Bacchae back to my Theatre of Dionysos... if...

CLEON:
What do you want?

DIONYSOS:
If you'll come with me and join in their revels.

CLEON:
Impossible. I'm too busy. I am Athens. Athens is me.

DIONYSOS:
Really? Your mind is troubled, isn't it?

CLEON:
No...

DIONYSOS:
Come closer. Let me see.

FX: BATTLE AND SCREAMS. GROWING AND GROWING. CLEON CRIES OUT. THEN THE SOUNDS STOP.

CLEON:
My Fury... my head is clear! Did you do that?

DIONYSOS:
Yes. And I can do more. Let the ship of state coast for a bit. You're coming to a party.

CLEON:
(TEMPTED) Can you control the Bacchae?

DIONYSOS: (silky)
Of course. Come, walk in their shoes... walk in the steps of their God....

SCENE 51. PRISON CELL

FX: DISTANT BACCHAE CHANTING: "DIONYSOS DIONYSOS DIONYSOS"

ARISTOPHANES:
The people are calling for your friend Dionysos.

THE DOCTOR:
Hector isn't Dionysos. He isn't anything.

ARISTOPHANES:
Cold.

THE DOCTOR:
He's just a man. He shouldn't even be here, but Ace wanted him to come. She couldn't let him go, couldn't let him die. So he's here, now. A memento of someone better. Poor Hector.

ARISTOPHANES:
He seems pretty sure of himself now that he's wearing that mask.

THE DOCTOR:
His mind is still recovering from our last adventure. He's in no fit state to control the subconscious of the city. It'll eat him alive. He doesn't know what he's doing.

ARISTOPHANES:
Do you?

THE DOCTOR:
Yes! Most of the time. Some of the time. When there's an R in the day. (COUGHS) I've handled this sort of thing quite successfully. But not Hector. He's never walked in history before. And he's not the sort to leave the past alone.

ARISTOPHANES:
He's trying to save the city. You're being hard on him.

THE DOCTOR:
I'm being hard on ME. My mistake. Trips to other planets, trips to the future - oh, Hector could cope with those. But not his own past.

ARISTOPHANES:
This is one of those things I'm never going to understand isn't it? Like when to avoid a joke about flatulence.

THE DOCTOR:
Take a man into his future and they are not affected because it's not happened to them yet. But take him into history and they are, however indirectly, a product of it. He could be doing untold damage to whatever makes him Mr Hector Schofield.

ARISTOPHANES:
By prancing around in a toga with a mask on pretending to be the God Of Fun? We're Athens, relax. Anything goes with aliens.

THE DOCTOR:
He's not an alien. He's a human. One whose very existence is... literally an Act of God. So the last thing he should do is pretend to be one.

ARISTOPHANES:
Pity. He does it rather well.

SCENE 52. GREEK STREETS

FX: BACCHAE RUNNING RIOT, CHANTING: “DIONYSOS IS COMING! DIONYSOS IS COMING!”

CITIZEN:
Save, us, someone, save us!

CITIZEN 2:
My head... I can feel them in my head.

CITIZEN:
What?

CITIZEN 2:
Die-Die-Die... Dionysos is coming.

FX: THE CHANTING GROWS AND SWELLS.

SCENE 53. CLEON'S PALACE

FX: ENTER CLEON

CLEON:
Well, what do you think? Do I look like one of your Bacchae?

DIONYSOS:
Amazing.

CLEON:
It's not dignified. But if I must pass among them, if I am to understand the influence you have over them... and denounce you.

DIONYSOS:
Yes, to denounce me, that's exactly why you're doing it.

CLEON:
Do I look enough like a wandering madman?

DIONYSOS:
The ivy in your hair, it's a nice touch.

CLEON:
I thought so.

DIONYSOS:
Let me... let me arrange it for you better. See?

CLEON:
Marvellous! You truly have the touch of a God.

DIONYSOS:
Do I?

CLEON:
My head! As the city descends into chaos, my mind becomes clearer. I am free of my Fury!

DIONYSOS:
Good. Then, shall we go? Out into the streets of your city?

CLEON:
Oh no, of your city. Let us wander among the mad.

SCENE 54. GREEK STREET

FX: THE WILD CHANTING. SUDDENLY, AS DIONYSOS ENTERS...

BACCHANTE:
Dionysos! Dionysos is free!

FX: WILD CHEERING.

DIONYSOS:
My people! As you can see, no prison can hold me.

BACCHANTE:
Celebrate!

CHEERING

DIONYSOS:
Oh all right then – but it's no good doing it here, blocking the streets.

FX: BOOS

DIONYSOS:
Have you forgotten there's a war on?

BACCHANTE:
It's all Cleon's fault!

BACCHANTE 2:
You should have his head!

DIONYSOS:
Come, my Bacchae – let's go to my Theatre. Let's clear the streets and have our revels there. Let's show Cleon how to party.

FX: WILD CHEERING. THE CROWD ROARS OFF

SCENE 55. THE SPARTAN CAMP

FX: DISTANT BACCHAE FROM OVER THE CITY WALLS

ACE:
Are they... are they having a party?

ADONIA:
They say the people of Athens are mad. You would not catch us doing that in Sparta.

ACE:
You don't have parties?

ADONIA:
We... do. But they must be carefully planned and trained for.

ACE:
Oh Sparta, you need to let your hair down.

ADONIA:
My hair is the approved length and style. It is the people's haircut.

ACE:
Good for it.

ADONIA:
You would look better with shorter hair.

ACE:
Thanks but no thanks.

ADONIA:
Poor you. It must be terrible having no ambitions. I bet you can't even read, can you?

ACE:
I can read.

ADONIA:
But still you don't know much. If it is a religious festival, then we should not intrude.

ACE:
That's no church service. They're having a knees-up.

ADONIA:
A party. So?

ACE:
Ladies of Sparta, I'm going to teach you how to gatecrash...

SCENE 56. THE PRISON CELL.

FX: CLANK CLANK. METAL GATE OPENS AS GUARDS ENTER

THE DOCTOR:
Ah, have you come to release us?

GUARD:
No, citizen. We have come to put you on trial.

FX: DOCTOR AND ARISTOPHANES GRABBED AND DRAGGED DOWN A STONE CORRIDOR.

ARISTOPHANES:
Strictly speaking, of course, it's only me who you're putting on trial.

THE DOCTOR:
I'm more of a defending counsel.

GUARD:
Right....

THE DOCTOR:
Could you, ah, give me the briefest refresher on Athenian Jurisprudence?

ARISTOPHANES:
Really?

THE DOCTOR:
I talked about it with Socrates once. I'm sure it'll come back to me.

ARISTOPHANES:
We'll be brought before Cleon -

GUARD:
No you won't. He's done a bunk.

ARISTOPHANES:
Ah. Then we'll be brought before a jury of voting citizens of Athens. You remember that play of mine, The Wasps?

THE DOCTOR:
Last year. Didn't win, didn't it?

ARISTOPHANES: No. But the joy I had poking fun at the jurors. Saying they were a bunch of old codgers –

THE DOCTOR:
Ah.

ARISTOPHANES:
Saying they were in the pay of Cleon!

THE DOCTOR:
Uh-huh.

ARISTOPHANES:
And that I don't know why he bothered corrupting them as they were all so miserable they found everyone guilty anyway.

THE DOCTOR:
I see.

ARISTOPHANES:
Oh, how the people laughed at them! And they had to sit there and take it. Ah, satire. I showed the old wasps. How they squirmed!

THE DOCTOR:
Did they?

GUARD:
Here we are. (SMILES) They're waiting for you.

ARISTOPHANES:
Anyway, point is – make a good case and they'll give you a fair hearing.

JUDGE: (distant)
My noble jurors, called before you on a charge of treason is Aristophanes of Cydathenaus (*Sigh-dath-een-ay-us*).

FX: THE JURORS BOO.

ARISTOPHANES:
Tough crowd, tough crowd.

SCENE 57. THE THEATRE.

FX: REVELRY, INCLUDING DANCING MUSIC.

CLEON:
Amazing.

DIONYSOS:
You think so?

CLEON:
Yesterday... these people were all infirm or mad. Today they're dancing in your theatre.

DIONYSOS:
I've cured them. Like I cured you.

CLEON:
But how? Alien magic?

DIONYSOS:
Perhaps I am a god.

CLEON:
It's not that.

DIONYSOS:
Still asking questions – why not just enjoy yourself?

CLEON:
I am.

DIONYSOS:
Come – join in the dance.

CLEON:
I'm Cleon of Athens. I don't dance.

DIONYSOS:
It'll do you good to lose your head.

FX: CLEON WHIRLED AWAY BY THE CROWD.

DIONYSOS: (sinister)
There goes Cleon, tyrant of Athens. Dancing. Not a care in the world. But who rules his city now?

SCENE 58. COURT.

FX: DISCONTENTED MUTTERING AS THE DOCTOR WALKS IN.

THE DOCTOR:
Hello Everybody! First of all, I won't keep you long.

JURORS SOME CHEERS

THE DOCTOR:
My client is charged with betraying Athens, yes?

JURORS BOO

THE DOCTOR:
And he's hurt you personally, has he not?

JURORS BOO

THE DOCTOR:
He can be very cruel, can't he?

JURORS AGREE

THE DOCTOR:
The audacity of the man, to put on a play in front of all of Athens, mocking you jurors?

LONE VOICE:
"Quite!"

THE DOCTOR:
And when he did that, you were furious, weren't you?

JURORS AGREE

THE DOCTOR:
You went home angry that night, you kicked your favourite chair, you went to sleep muttering. How dare he, how dare he?

JURORS MUTTER "True, true"

THE DOCTOR:
And what did he call you – corrupt, vindictive old men, wasn't it?

JURORS LOUD BOOS

THE DOCTOR:
Exactly. You're not, are you?

JURORS: "No!", "Outrageous!"

THE DOCTOR:
Of course you're not. Wouldn't dream of suggesting it. But... I hate to say this... but perhaps some jurors were corrupt. And they went home that night and they never came back, did they?

JURORS - "thinking about it" murmurs.

THE DOCTOR:
The result – the rotten apples were weeded out. So, reprehensible as my client's methods no doubt were – the outcome was for the good of Athens!

JURORS: "ooh, he has a point" murmurs.

THE DOCTOR:
That's all my client does. He is a surgeon – his satires may be blunt instruments, but his points are razor sharp. Where he finds a fault, he exposes it to laughter, and then banishes it. Athens is made better.

JURORS AGREE

THE DOCTOR:
Perhaps a satirist should know when to sit down and shut up. But Aristophanes is on trial today for simply saying that this City is sick of war. And you are, aren't you?

JURORS CHEER

THE DOCTOR:
You've lost your families, your wealth and your crops.

JURORS AGREE

THE DOCTOR:
Who wouldn't want an end to that? Especially, a little bird tells me, when peace with Sparta is in sight.

JURORS AGREE

THE DOCTOR:
The war could be over. Your sons could come home.

JURORS HOORAY

THE DOCTOR:
And Athens could be great again.

JURORS APPLAUD AND CHEER

CONTINUES ON NEXT PAGE

THE DOCTOR:
My client was simply saying that those who prolong this war are working against Athen's best interests.

JURORS: "And they are!" "Villains!"

THE DOCTOR:
By doing so, he was using the thing that Athens hold vital – his freedom of speech.

JURORS: Hear Hear!

THE DOCTOR:
Would you have me take that freedom of speech away from him?

JURORS: No! Shame on you!

THE DOCTOR:
Then I shan't.

JURORS: Hooray!

THE DOCTOR:
He wants a strong Athens!

JURORS CHEER

THE DOCTOR:
He wants a free Athens!

JURORS CHEER

THE DOCTOR:
He wants an end to war!

JURORS CHANT: "An end to war! An end to war!"

THE DOCTOR:
I rest my case. Thank you.

FX: CHEERING

ARISTOPHANES: (soft)
Of course, Doctor, you didn't say that what I really want is first prize.

THE DOCTOR MUTTERS

ARISTOPHANES: (serious)
Doctor, well done. Thank you.

CONTINUES ON NEXT PAGE

THE DOCTOR:
That was the easy bit. Now to actually save the City...

SCENE 59. OUTSIDE THE CITY WALLS

FX: DISTANT BACCHAE AS THE SPARTAN ARMY APPROACH, THEIR MARCHING MUSIC CEASING

ACE:
Right, pull up ladies. We're at the City Gates.

ADONIA:
Are they... still having a party?

THEY LISTEN TO THE NOISE

ACE:
Sounds like it.

ADONIA:
Shameful.

ACE:
Oh, I dunno. Means it'll be easy for us to get in. Look – no guards on the walls.

ADONIA:
The Long Walls of Athens have kept everyone at bay. They're impenetrable.

ACE:
Yeah... about that. What's a party without a few fireworks?

ADONIA:
Fireworks?

ACE:
Riiiight. Not invented yet.

FX: ACE IN HER RUCKSACK.

ACE:
Here we go.

ADONIA:
What is that silver flask? Are you pouring a libation in offering to the gods?

ACE:
Not exactly.

FX: ACE WALKS UP TO THE CITY WALLS.

ACE:
Thermos Flask. Thermodynamics.

ADONIA:
Thermo....

ACE:
Greek Fire. Stand back.

FX: BANG!!! THE GATES OF ATHENS BLOW UP.

ADONIA:
Ace, you blew up the gates! Amazing!

ACE:
Yeah. Come on, we've got a party to join and my friends to save!

ADONIA:
Spartans! Athens is ours! Put the Athenians to the slaughter!

FX: CHEERS AND ROARING AS THE SPARTANS RUSH INTO THE CITY.

ACE: (alarmed)
What? Hang on, wait, wait!

SCENE 60. INSIDE THE THEATRE

FX: BACCHAE CHANTING AND REVELLING. FUN.

DIONYSOS:
Cleon, mate, there you are. Having fun?

CLEON: (despite himself)
Yes.

DIONYSOS:
What do you think of the dance?

CLEON:
Truly ecstasy.

DIONYSOS:
Not lost your head?

CLEON:
Not yet.

DIONYSOS:
Another dance?

CLEON:
Later. Tell me, how do you do control them?

HECTOR:
It's a secret. But are you having fun?

CLEON:
For once in my life. Thank you. I owe that to you, Dionysos!

FX: BACCHAE CHEER.

BACCHAE:
Dionysos! Dionysos! Dionysos!

DIONYSOS: (over this)
See? Even Cleon bows to Dionysos!

BACCHAE CHEER. “Cleon... Cleon... Cleon!”

DIONYSOS:
Gather round, Bacchae! Garland Cleon! Anoint him! For he's a jolly good fellow!

DIONYSOS AND THE BACCHAE sing “For He's a jolly good fellow”. It starts out jubilant, but has a sinister edge as they close in on Cleon.

CHORUS:
And so say all of us.
And so say all of us.

FX: EERIE SILENCE FALLS. SOMEONE GIGGLES.

CLEON:
Go on then. Do it.

DIONYSOS:
Do what?

CLEON:
You're a strong man – or haven't you the stomach for it?

DIONYSOS:
For what?

CLEON:
Don't make me laugh. I've a classical education. I know the story you theatre folk tell – how Dionysos took revenge on a tyrant who wouldn't worship him. Beguiled him, led him to the Bacchae... and they tore him apart. That's what happens next, isn't it?

DIONYSOS:
That's... that the story, yeah.

CLEON:
Go on.

DIONYSOS:
Yes, it's time. (GROANS) No, I can't...

CLEON:
But you have to. You're a god, are you not? I'm a ruler who won't worship you. You can't let that challenge stand. Can you...?

BACCHAE (sinister)
Blasphemy... must... be... punished...

DIONYSOS: (weak)
I forgive you. This time.

CLEON:
Not good enough.

DIONYSOS: (desperate)
I am a merciful god!

BACCHAE:
Show no mercy!

DIONYSOS:
Shut up! Listen... (CRIES OUT) The mask! So many thoughts.... They hurt me when I won't do what they want...

BACCHAE:
Give! Us! Cleon!

FX: DIONYSOS CRIES IN PAIN.

CLEON:
You're no longer in control of your story. I'm at your mercy. Surrounded by your supporters. Eager to tear me limb from limb. After all, it's just one life. One life to bring peace to Athens. Isn't that right, Bacchae?

BACCHAE:
Kill Cleon! Kill Cleon!

FX: BACCHAE ADVANCE ON CLEON. HE STRUGGLES IN PAIN.

CLEON:
Come on Dionysos. Don't stop them!

DIONYSOS: (effort)
No! That's the story, but I'm not a story. I can't do it.

CLEON:
A god would.

DIONYSOS: (pain)
I'm not... a god. Just an actor...

CLEON:
You're not even that. An actor wouldn't hesitate. He becomes the part. You're just a man.

FX: BACCHAE FALL BACK, HISSING.

DIONYSOS:
So? What if I am?

CLEON:
You don't deserve to wear that mask. That's the source of your power, isn't it?

DIONYSOS: (Gasping)
Stay back. Don't touch it – it hurt you before.

CLEON:
<u>You</u> wanted it to. I don't think it will hurt me now.

DIONYSOS:
I'm warning you, mate, for your own good -

FX: HECTOR SCREAMS AS THE MASK IS TORN FROM HIM.

CLEON:
Thank you. Looks like the mask doesn't believe in you any more, either.

HECTOR: (agony)
My eyes! I'm blind! What's happened to my eyes?

FX: BUZZING FROM THE MASK AS CLEON PUTS IT ON.

CLEON:
There. The mask fits perfectly. Ohhhhhh....

BACCHAE:
CLEON! CLEON! CLEON!

CLEON:
Thank you. For showing me how to control the city. I can feel it... my mind reaching out... Finally... I AM ATHENS.

HECTOR: (weak)
Stop it... Don't let the mask into your head! (CRIES OUT)

FX: BACCHAE SEIZE HECTOR AND START TO ATTACK HIM.

CLEON:
That's right Bacchae. Teach him that weak men shouldn't try and become gods. They haven't the (PAUSE) stomach for it.

HECTOR CRIES OUT.

CLEON:
But I have. Oh Athens, how beautiful, how strong you are now. Now that you're me. They said I wanted to be king... but I'm much better than that. I'm now a god.

FX: HE LAUGHS. THE BACCHAE LAUGH WITH HIM. UNDER THIS WE HEAR HECTOR'S SCREAMS. BUT MOSTLY THE LAUGHTER. ECHOING ACROSS ATHENS.

EPISODE FOUR.

SCENE 61. THE THEATRE

CLEON:
Come – we'll make this city great again. They accused me of prolonging this war? Let's finish it.

BACCHANTE:
What about this man?

FX: HECTOR GROANS

CLEON:
Is he still alive? (SHRUGS) leave him on the stage. We have more important things to do. Come.

FX: CLEON AND THE BACCHAE SWEEP OUT.

SCENE 62. BENEATH THE CITY WALLS

FX: SPARTANS RUSH THROUGH THE GATES.

ADONIA:
Slaughter them!

ACE:
Wait! Stop! You can't sack the city! That wasn't the plan!

ADONIA:
We needed you. Who better than an Athenian to get us into Athens? And now we shall wipe it out!

FX: CHEERS AND ROARS.

ACE:
No! You lying Spartan! You said you didn't lie!

ADONIA:
I lied.

FX: THE SPARTAN ARMY POUR INTO ATHENS.

BUT, UNDERNEATH IT ALL...

BACCHAE: (distant)
Cleon! Cleon! Cleon!

ADONIA:
Go on my girls! Crush them! You beauties!

FX: THE BACCHAE AND THE SPARTANS CLASH.

SPARTAN SOLDIER: (Distant)
There's a wall of them. We can't... get past them. It's like the whole city.... Too many – no, keep back!(screams)

BACCHAE:
Cleon! Cleon! Cleon!

ADONIA:
No!

ACE:
What's going on?

FX: SCREAMS FROM THE SPARTANS

ADONIA:
They're tearing my troops apart.

ACE:
They're not even armed.

ADONIA: What is this?

ACE:
Weird. And horrible. They're like zombies.

FX: MORE SCREAMS AND BATTLE.

ADONIA:
Witchcraft?

ACE:
I don't know, but call your troops back.

ADONIA:
Spartans do not retreat.

ACE:
Then you're stupid as well as nasty. Look – those aren't just soldiers, they're your friends.

ADONIA: (hesitates)
You're right. This is a massacre. Oh, I should have been exposed at birth. (CALLS) Retreat. You heard me! Fall back!

SCENE 63. TOP OF THE THEATRE

FX: ACTUALLY, PEACEFUL FOR A CHANGE. CICADAS.

ARISTOPHANES:
When they hauled me off, I thought I'd never see this old theatre again. Ah, I love the view down to the sea. Especially at dawn.

THE DOCTOR:
Hasn't it been dawn for a while now?

ARISTOPHANES:
Yes. Come to think of it.

THE DOCTOR:
Psychic overflow impinging on the troposphere. Giving me a headache. Not good.

ARISTOPHANES:
Should I be worried?

THE DOCTOR:
There's a lot to be worried about.

ARISTOPHANES:
It's peaceful. The streets were empty.

THE DOCTOR:
That's one thing I'm worried about. Where is everyone?

FX: BRIEF JUMP CUT TO SPARTANS VS BACCHAE RAGING BATTLE

ARISTOPHANES:
It is a bit quiet.

DISTANT GROAN.

HECTOR: (weak, distant)
Doctor?

THE DOCTOR:
What was that?

ARISTOPHANES:
Someone calling your name – those rags down on the stage?

FX: THE DOCTOR AND ARISTOPHANES RUN DOWN THE STONE STEPS TO THE GROANING HECTOR.

THE DOCTOR:
Hector! Oh, Mr Schofield...

ARISTOPHANES:
What happened to him?

THE DOCTOR:
What does it look like? His mind is probably in a worse state than his body.

HECTOR:
Help me...

THE DOCTOR:
Who did this?

HECTOR:
Cleon... took the mask...

THE DOCTOR: He did what?!

ARISTOPHANES:
Is that bad?

THE DOCTOR:
Bad? A telegenic mask is being worn by a lunatic tyrant.

ARISTOPHANES:
Cleon?

THE DOCTOR:
Now has control over every mind in Athens.

ARISTOPHANES:
But we're fine.

THE DOCTOR:
And that's why I have a slight headache. Don't thank me for protecting you. Oh, Hector, I warned you! I said it would go badly.

HECTOR: (agony)
Someone had to do something... you wouldn't...

THE DOCTOR:
This is not my fault! Why couldn't you trust me? I have done this before, you know.

HECTOR:
Didn't seem like it.

THE DOCTOR:
Really? I've lived 900 years. I know how to take the long road.

HECTOR: If you’re wanting an apology you’ll have a long wait.

THE DOCTOR:
Just for once, I'd like someone to understand how I work.

HECTOR COUGHS WEAKLY.

THE DOCTOR:
Never mind. There's a time and a place. Aristophanes, help me get him up...

FX: GROANS AS HECTOR IS PICKED UP.

THE DOCTOR:
We need to get him to that beetle. Quickly.

ARISTOPHANES:
What?

THE DOCTOR:
You heard.

SCENE 64. GREEK STREET

FX: SCREAMS AND SHOUTS OF BATTLE.

CLEON:
That's right, my people! Throw yourselves on them! Crush them. Your lives don't matter. It's the numbers that count. We move as one, think as one, we're unbeatable!

FX: MORE SCREAMS AS THE BACCHAE CHARGE

SCENE 65. OUTSIDE THE CITY GATES

FX: BATTLE. A LITTLE FURTHER AWAY.

ACE:
Have you got your troops out?

ADONIA:
Some are still in there. They're being torn apart.

FX: A DISTANT SCREAM.

ACE:
Someone's not playing fair. Serves you right.

ADONIA:
Few play fair on the dancing plain of Ares.

ACE:
I don't know what's happened to the Athenians, but they're unstoppable.

SCENE 66. THE THEATRE

FX: HECTOR GROANS, HIS BREATHING BECOMES SHALLOW.

THE DOCTOR:
You stupid beetle. Wake up! Hector's dying – I won't lose him again. I won't...

FX: FEEBLE BUZZ FROM TYRGIUS

ARISTOPHANES:
Doctor, your scarab friend is waking up.

FX: ANOTHER BUZZ

THE DOCTOR:
Hurry, Tyrgius... Hector's slipping away.

FX: ANOTHER BUZZ.

TYRGIUS: (yawns)
Whassa problem? Why've you woken me from my healing coma?

THE DOCTOR:
My friend needs you, psychoxenosurgeon Tyrgius.

TYRGIUS:
Oh dear, he has been in the wars. What happened to him?

THE DOCTOR:
He, ah, stole your mask.

TYRGIUS:
He what?

THE DOCTOR: (mutters)
Took it, pretended to be a god, and now Cleon has stolen it.

TYRGIUS:
WHAT??!?!

ARISTOPHANES:
Calm down. Don't get your wings in a twist.

TYRGIUS:
Hector had no right!

THE DOCTOR:
No, he didn't. And neither did you.

TYRGIUS:
Sorry? How dare you!

THE DOCTOR:
Flying over the victims of the plague? How long have you been doing that?

TYRGIUS:
I hardly see how that's relevant.

THE DOCTOR:
You've been trying to use your mask to cure them. Amplifying your natural healing talents.

TYRGIUS:
A few therapeutic thoughts, that's all...

THE DOCTOR:
Making them susceptible to telepathic control. Causing a buffer overload.

TYRGIUS:
I was just trying to fit in. It's hard when you're a giant beetle. I was saving lives. Doing something for Athens. No, don't thank me.

THE DOCTOR:
I don't have time for a sarcastic scarab. The plague is a terrible thing – but that doesn't mean you can go around curing it. That's irresponsible.

ARISTOPHANES:
What? Saving lives is irresponsible?

THE DOCTOR:
Sorry, but it is. The plague is what happens to Athens. Set in stone. The population has to decrease in order for the state to make peace with Sparta. Otherwise the war you all hate so much will drag on for decades.

ARISTOPHANES:
You make that sound so easy. It's taken so many people... friends... my family. And you say it HAS to happen?

THE DOCTOR: Fewer people die in the end. I hate the way the universe works, sometimes. Please. Help me save Hector. He shouldn't be here. Dying.

TYRGIUS:
I can heal him... But what about Athens?

THE DOCTOR:
Let's start with the small things.

TYRGIUS:
All right. Let me just... get the frequency right...

FX: A BUZZING OF WINGS.

THE DOCTOR:
You do that, I'll work out what I can possibly do next.

SCENE 67. OUTSIDE THE CITY GATES

CLEON: (distant, from the top of the City Walls)
Can you hear me, Spartans? This is Cleon, God Of Athens!

ADONIA:
The what now?

CLEON: (distant)
I've let some of you live. Take a message. Athens fights as one. Every man, woman, child and slave. We are unbeatable. So run and hide while you still can. Because we're coming for you.

ADONIA:
I don't believe it.

ACE:
I do. When a man puts on a mask and says he's a superhero, it's never good news.

SCENE 68: THEATRE

ARISTOPHANES: (distant)
Doctor, it looks like Cleon's taken control of Athens.

THE DOCTOR:
Aristophanes, get me all the masks you have.

ARISTOPHANES:
What?

THE DOCTOR:
Raid the prop cupboard. Everything!

ARISTOPHANES:
Some of it's not mine. Euripides will kill me.

THE DOCTOR:
He won't notice. Hurry.

ARISTOPHANES:
Can I ask why?

THE DOCTOR:
Not until I've got some copper wire and done something clever.

SCENE 69. OUTSIDE THE CITY GATES

FX: SILENCE OF A BATTLEFIELD

ACE: (calling)
Oi.... CLEON. You at home?

CLEON: (battlements)
Yes? Oh. You again.

ACE:
Yes. Just a girl. Remember, you threw me outside?

CLEON:
How's that going?

ACE:
Not so bad. Look at me. With the Spartan Army. And how's being a god?

CLEON:
Can't complain. Finally winning the war.

ACE:
Yeah. With your horde of mindless slaves.

CLEON:
They are not mindless. They have my mind.

ACE:
Mmmn. Same difference. You don't really do forward planning do you? Let me see, at your current form, it takes 10 of your lot to take out 1 of mine. How many thousands have you got? Just so I know how many hundred Spartans I need to order up.

CLEON:
I'll save you the effort – I'll reach out to your Spartans and....

FX: ADONIA and the SPARTANS CRY OUT.

ADONIA:
C-c-c-cleon....

ACE:
Playing dirty? You're new at this, aren't you? Spartans! Fight back. Wherever you see him sneaking into your head, hit that thought. Hit it hard. It's what you Spartans are good at!

FX: ADONIA and THE SPARTANS GRUNT.

FX: CLEON GRUNTS.

ACE:
That's taking more effort isn't it, Cleon? I guess, if you're giving everyone a piece of your mind, you’re spreading yourself a bit thin.

CLEON:
Shut up!

ACE:
Adonia, the Athenians near the city gates – they're staggering about. I've given you an advantage.

ADONIA: (weak)
You...want us to attack again?

ACE:
Yeah. Don't kill them.

ADONIA:
Why not?

ACE:
Because it’ll give him a bit more of his mind back. Knock them out.

ADONIA:
Oh that's easy.

ACE:
Go on, then. Give him Hades....

SCENE 70: THE THEATRE

FX: DISTANT FIGHTING

HECTOR:
The battle sounds pretty bad.

THE DOCTOR:
Yes. Feeling better?

HECTOR:
A little. (AWKWARD) Can I help?

THE DOCTOR:
For a change, yes. Take this wire and these snips.

FX: ARISTOPHANES RUNNING UP

ARISTOPHANES:
Here's all the masks I could lay my hands on.

FX: THROWS THEM DOWN.

HECTOR:
Who's this one?

ARISTOPHANES:
Medea the child killer.

HECTOR:
Nice.

ARISTOPHANES:
What do you want with them?

THE DOCTOR: Go to the top of the theatre. Where's the beetle?

ARISTOPHANES:
Gone back to sleep – healing your friend's taken it out of him.

THE DOCTOR:
Pity, I needed him.

HECTOR:
Another thing which is my fault, I suppose?

THE DOCTOR:
It's not your day, is it? (PAUSE) Come on.

FX: THEY SCRAMBLE UP THE THEATRE STEPS.

HECTOR:
The cheap seats? What's up there?

ARISTOPHANES:
Well, there’s a nice view of the surrounding countryside.

HECTOR:
(BREATHLESS) Really?

ARISTOPHANES:
Oh yes. Several thousand people coming our way planning on tearing us limb from limb. Quite the picture.

HECTOR:
Sorry about that.

ARISTOPHANES:
Why did you have to choose Dionysos? Couldn't you have picked Hermes the Messenger? Then his followers would all have run away. But oh no, you had to pick the dancing murderers.

HECTOR:
Sorry. It just came into my head. Name of the theatre. And this chap told me a bit about him – that actor...

THE DOCTOR:
Who?

HECTOR: (lying)
Can't remember.

ARISTOPHANES:
Telephus!

THE DOCTOR:
The spy?

ARISTOPHANES:
Who you brought here!

HECTOR:
Alright! I just met him in the street. That's all.

THE DOCTOR:
All?

HECTOR:
He said he could help find Ace, and I thought... what would be the harm? I'm sorry, okay?

THE DOCTOR: (acid)
Just don't drop those masks.

FX: THEY SIT DOWN, EXHAUSTED.

ARISTOPHANES:
Here we are.

THE DOCTOR:
Good. Now for some hurried welding. Since we haven't got Cleon's mask, I'm going to make a lot of the next best thing. With copper wire, and a few bits and bobs I got from my... caravan.

ARISTOPHANES:
Oh, your TARDIS.

THE DOCTOR: (tightly)
Yes. My caravan.

HECTOR:
That's enough to build more of Tyrgius's masks?

THE DOCTOR:
The pound shop version. Let's get cracking.

FX: THE DOCTOR PULLS OUT HIS SONIC SCREWDRIVER.

ARISTOPHANES:
My word, what a thyrsus!

THE DOCTOR:
It's a sonic screwdriver.

ARISTOPHANES:
Even the gods don't have one that lights up. I say, could I borrow that for my play?

THE DOCTOR:
If we don't get a move on there won't be any play. Ever again.

SCENE 71. OUTSIDE THE CITY GATES

FX: MORE BATTLEFIELD

ADONIA:
Well done my sisters!

ACE:
Yeah, drive them back!

CLEON: (shouting)
Bacchae, to the Theatre! Regroup!

BACCHAE:
Die! Die! Die!

FX: PITCHED BATTLE.

SCENE 72: THEATRE

FX: THEY'RE BACK DOWNSTAIRS. DISTANT CROWD.

ARISTOPHANES:
The Bacchae are coming this way. Pretty quickly. What do we do now?

FX: JEWEL RATTLING NOISE.

THE DOCTOR:
I want you to take this handful of Mettybelis crystals.

ARISTOPHANES:
Mettebelis?

THE DOCTOR:
Whatever. Take them and think. They'll form a memory patten that'll be reproduced by the wearer.

ARISTOPHANES: Think? Think about what?

THE DOCTOR:
About... something that makes you smile.
(PAUSE) Noo, not that. Something harmless.

ARISTOPHANES:
Oh right. (LAUGHS) Yes. That'll do.

FX: ROARING COMING CLOSER.

THE DOCTOR:
I'll fit the crystals to the masks. Hector?

HECTOR:
Yes?

THE DOCTOR:
As the Bacchae come towards us, put these masks on their heads.

HECTOR:
What? I don't much fancy-

THE DOCTOR:
I don't care. Just do it!

HECTOR:
Right.

ARISTOPHANES:
I'll help.

HECTOR:
Cheers.

ARISTOPHANES:
They're coming....!

FX: ROARS OF BACCHAE RUNNING IN.

HECTOR: (deep breath)
Not again.

ARISTOPHANES:
Oh gods I don't really believe in, please protect us.

FX: LOUD ROARS.

HECTOR: (softly)
Right then.

FX: AND LOUDER...

FX: SUDDENLY, THE CROWD IS UPON HIM, IT'S LIKE HECTOR IS UNDERWATER. AUDIO EQUIVALENT OF SLOW MO BATTLE SEQUENCES. HECTOR'S HEART BEAT. ROAR OF THE CROWD. MAGICAL.

THEN – REALITY. HECTOR AND ARISTOPHANES SCREAMING. BRAVADO BUT PAIN.

HECTOR:
Come here! Put this on!

ARISTOPHANES:
This one's for you, madam!

HECTOR:
There you go! Arg! Doctor! This had better work!

ARISTOPHANES:
On you go! Now, please work!

FX: SUDDENLY, THE CROWD STOP THEIR MAD ROAR.

CROWD:
Bre... Brekekekex Brekekekex Koax Koax!
(repeats, echoing around the stadium)

HECTOR:
What?

ARISTOPHANES:
The Frogs! It's my frogs! My lovely chorus of frogs.

THE DOCTOR:
Fit more masks. Quickly.

FX: THE FROGS CHANT. JOINED BY THE TWITTERING OF BIRDS. AND THE BUZZING OF WASPS.

BIRDS:
Epopoi popopopoi
Torotix Torotix Torotix
Koukou koukou koukou

ARISTOPHANES:
It's beautiful.

HECTOR:
What is it?

ARISTOPHANES:
All the choruses I've ever done or thought of – Birds, Frogs, Clouds, Wasps... the works. The complete works. Look at it!

FX: CHITTERING BUZZING TWITTER CROAKING GROWS.

HECTOR:
Oh... oh wow...

ARISTOPHANES:
In any play, the chorus is the voice of reason.

THE DOCTOR:
Our psychic wave is spreading through the crowd, across Athens. Countering all that rage and madness...

ARISTOPHANES:
Tragedy dispersed by comedy?

THE DOCTOR:
We may have a hit on our hands.

ARISTOPHANES:
Blimey.

HECTOR:
Yeah, well, let’s not sit around waiting for the reviews, let's make some more masks, shall we?

SCENE 73: GREEK STREET

FX: STREET FIGHTING BATTLE

CLEON:
And this is for you, stupid girl.

ACE:
Cleon! That's you all over. Beating up a woman?

FX: SUDDEN CRY FROM CLEON AS ADONIA HITS HIM

ADONIA:
Whereas I've got no qualms about beating up a man.

ACE:
Adonia! You came back!

ADONIA:
A few of us. To do what we can. Sacrificing ourselves against a mighty army.

CLEON:
A blood sacrifice. One I shall enjoy. Bacchae! Seize them! Rip them apart!

FX: BACCHAE GRAB HOLD OF THEM. ACE AND ADONIA GASP. AND THEN.

BACCHAE:
Bre--- brekekex...Brekekex – Brekekex! Koax Koax!

CLEON:
What?

BACCHANTE:
I'm a cloud! Dancing on the winds of thought! Wheeeee!

BACCHANTE 2:
Koukou koukou koukou!

CLEON:
Stop this! Stop it!

FX: BUT THE VARIOUS SOUNDS SPREAD. CLEON SCREAMS IN RAGE.

CLEON:
My city! My people! What’s happening!?

ACE:
I think you're losing them.

ADONIA:
Come along, girls.

ACE: Lead them to the theatre. Go on. It's safe there.

FX: THE SPARTANS DRIVE THE BACCHAE AWAY

CLEON:
Maybe safe for them, but not for you.

FX: WHOOSH OF FIRE BRAND.

CLEON:
See this torch? If you're going to take my city from me, then maybe I don't want it any more. I'm going to burn it. Starting with you.

SCENE 74: THEATRE

FX: SPARTAN ARMY HERD THE PEOPLE OF ATHENS INTO THE THEATRE

ARISTOPHANES:
I don't believe it. Look at that!

ADONIA:
Behold the might of Sparta. I've brought you an audience.

HECTOR:
Wow.

THE DOCTOR:
This is excellent. Thank you, Sparta.

TYRGIUS:
Bring them closer. I can help...

THE DOCTOR:
So you're awake, Tyrgius? About time.

TYRGIUS: (groans)
I'm still the mask's primary power source. It's draining me... But I'll do what I can.

THE DOCTOR:
Capital.

HECTOR:
Where's Ace?

ADONIA:
She's still fighting Cleon. Out there...

HECTOR: (worried)
Near all that smoke?

THE DOCTOR: Smoke? Did you say smoke?

HECTOR:
The city's on fire!

SCENE 75: GREEK STREET

FX: ACE IS COUGHING FROM ALL THE SMOKE AND FLAME.

ACE:
Can't breathe... Cleon, you'll be burned too. Don't you care?

CLEON:
I have nothing left to care for. I have lost my city.

ACE:
Then maybe it didn't mean that much to you in the first place.

CLEON:
They will remember me. If not as a god, then as the man who destroyed Athens.

FX: MORE FLAMES.

ACE:
Doctor! Hector... help....

FX: SUDDEN BUZZING NOISE

ACE:
What the hell's that?!?

CLEON:
No! It's my Winged Fury! I banished you! Keep away!

ACE:
What is that? You know, don't you?

CLEON:
It haunts the battlefields. It's a demon.

FX: BUZZING CLOSER AND CLOSER.

TYRGIUS:
I'm a xenopsychosurgeon actually. Hello.

ACE:
Hello.

CLEON:
Don't touch me again!

TYRGIUS:
Oh do shut up. You have something of mine. The mask. Give it to me.

CLEON:
No.

TYRGIUS:
Then I shall take it from you. And you won't enjoy it.

CLEON SCREAMS AND FALLS AS THE MASK IS TORN OFF.

TYRGIUS:
Now to destroy it.

FX: MASK BROKEN. BLAST OF RELEASE.

TYRGIUS:
That's better. You, girl?

ACE:
Yes.

TYRGIUS:
Hop on my back. We're flying out of here. Get up. You on?

FX: ACE CLIMBS ON A BEETLE

ACE:
Just about. What about Cleon? Should we leave him?

TYRGIUS:
Oh, I suppose you'd better heave him up too.

FX: ACE AND TYRGIUS GRUNT.

ACE:
Okay, he's aboard. What now?

TYRGIUS:
Find something to hold onto. Ow! Not that.

ACE:
Sorry. The flames are getting close.

TYRGIUS:
Time to get out of here.

FX: BUZZING AS TYRGIUS RISES

ACE:
I've never done this before. Is it safe?

TYRGIUS:
No idea, I've never done it before either.

ACE:
Oh.

FX: THE FLAMES ROAR – NEAR AND DANGEROUS.

ACE: (worried)
Can you go any higher?

TYRGIUS: (grunts)
You're both quite heavy. Don't look at the flames, look at the sky, look at the pretty sky. (GRUNTS) You know, I think the sun's coming up at last.

FX: FLAMES RISE. THE BEETLE FLIES OFF.

ACE:
(REACTING TO WHOOSHING UP IN THE AIR) Woahhhh!

SCENE 76: THEATRE

FX: THE SOUND OF THE PEOPLE OF ATHENS PASSING OUT AND FALLING TO THE GROUND

ARISTOPHANES:
What the hell just happened?

HECTOR:
Everyone passed out.

ARISTOPHANES:
Why?

THE DOCTOR:
Dawn. The mask has been destroyed. The people of Athens are asleep. A few minutes' healing coma and they'll be right as rain.

HECTOR:
Even the ones who are supposed to be dead?

THE DOCTOR:
Um. Tyrgius has cured them. Accidentally. That makes him not my favourite beetle.

FX: BUZZING. SOUNDS OF ACE CRYING OUT AS SHE FLIES IN.

ARISTOPHANES:
What's that up in the sky? Is it a bird? Is it an astral plane?

THE DOCTOR AND HECTOR:
It's Ace! On a beetle!

ACE:
Woah! Incoming!

FX: ACE JUMPS DOWN. BRINGS CLEON'S BODY WITH HER.

ACE:
Thanks for the lift, mate.

TYRGIUS:
Don't mention it. I'll just have a lie down (BUZZ) Behind the stage... (BUZZ) Very tired.

FX: BEETLE BUZZES AWAY

ACE:
Doctor, Hector! Long time no see. I've brought Cleon with me. Didn't drop him from a great height.

THE DOCTOR:
Good.

ACE:
This is a right mess.

HECTOR:
It's my fault.

ACE:
City in flames? Population unconscious? Ah, beginner's luck.

HECTOR:
Cheers.

THE DOCTOR:
Help me drag Cleon to his seat...

ACE:
Sure.

FX: SOUNDS OF CLEON BEING DRAGGED.

HECTOR:
Are any of them going to remember? When they wake up?

THE DOCTOR:
Cleon will. I wonder how that'll play out...

ACE:
What about the rest?

ARISTOPHANES:
Waking up in a daze in the theatre? I'll just tell them they've slept through something by Euripides...

HECTOR:
And then what?

ARISTOPHANES:
This, dear boy, is a theatre. Why not give them a play?

ACE AND HECTOR:
What?

THE DOCTOR:
That may not be a bad idea.

FX: DISTANT GROANS AS THE PEOPLE OF ATHENS AWAKE IN CONFUSION

ACE:
Doctor...

HECTOR:
They're waking up! Are you sure about this?

THE DOCTOR:
For want of a better idea, let's put the show on right here.

ARISTOPHANES: (calling)
Citizens!

CLEON: (waking)
You! Traitors! What have you done?

ARISTOPHANES:
Oh pipe down. Hello, Athens. Take your seats. Don't worry, the tragedy is over. Now it's time for a comedy. You're in safe hands. I'm Aristophanes.

FX: CROWD GROANS. FEEBLE APPLAUSE.

ARISTOPHANES:
I'll give you a couple of minutes to get properly awake, then we'll get started.

THE DOCTOR: (hisses)
You know, I think we might be about to get away with it.

FX: SUDDEN CRASHING NOISE. ENTER THE SPARTAN ARMY. MUCH ALARM.

ADONIA:
Greetings Athens. We're the Spartan Army.

HECTOR:
Oh dear.

CLEON:
Citizens, we're invaded!

ADONIA:
Don't look so alarmed. We're not staying. Us girls just came by to put out a fire. It's fine. Don't thank us.

FX: CROWD REACTS TO THE NEWS, 'WHAT FIRE?'

CLEON:
There will be a full investigation...

ADONIA:
You can just see the smoke over there.

CLEON:
A Spartan plot!

ADONIA:
Uh huh.

ARISTOPHANES:
I think, just for once, the people of Athens owe the Spartans a debt of gratitude.

CLEON:
Rubbish.

ARISTOPHANES:
Those were ordinary homes set on fire. Not palaces. Not temples. Voter's homes. Like yours and mine. Well, not yours, Cleon. You do live in a palace, after all.

FX: LAUGHTER. SOME APPLAUSE.

CLEON:
People of Athens, seize them! Now! I order you!

FX: INSTEAD A SLOW HANDCLAP AND CATCALLS.

CLEON:
Listen to me! My people, listen-

FX: MORE BOOS. “SIT DOWN!” etc

ARISTOPHANES:
Sounds like your people want us to get on with the play. Perhaps, Spartans, you'd care to stay?

FX: SOME MUTTERING

ARISTOPHANES:
Oh, come on. Let's show the Spartans how to have fun, eh? For once in their lives!

FX: LAUGHTER. APPLAUSE.

CLEON:
What? Will you listen to this traitor? If you think I’m going to stay for this outrage...

ARISTOPHANES:
Pity. If you go, you'll miss the jokes about you. Wouldn't want the people thinking you were a bad sport, now, would we?

FX: MOCKING LAUGHTER.

CLEON:
I shall stay. A temporary truce is called.

ARISTOPHANES:
Ladies, take your seats! Come on people, budge up.

ADONIA:
Very well. We shall... have fun.

FX: MUTTERING ANTICIPATION.

ARISTOPHANES:
Splendid! I'll just nip behind the Skene. You'll have to forgive the play. It's even rougher than usual. My cast is indisposed. But, we'll improvise. Gentlemen and, for once, Ladies, tonight, I give you a little play I'll call "Peace..."

OPENING SPEECH FROM PEACE

(**SLAVE: (Aristophanes with a silly accent?)**
"People! I tell you all, my master is Mad.
A whole new kind of madness. No, not the madness of Cleon.
(laughter)My Master is mad for Peace. He cries out to Zeus
"Dear lovely, sweet Zeus, do not sweep Athens away...")

SCENE 77: BEHIND THE SCENES

FX: (in the background we can hear bits of Peace, and audience laughter)

HECTOR:
This is a disaster.

THE DOCTOR:
I don't know. Seems to be going down quite well.

HECTOR:
But Doctor – The Spartans are here!

THE DOCTOR:
Yes, and they're sat down watching a play and laughing.

HECTOR:
But...

THE DOCTOR:
Hush! It's time for me to operate the Deus Ex Machina. (*Day-us Ex Mack-inna*)

HECTOR:
What?

FX: THE DOCTOR ACTIVATES WOOD, ROPES AND PULLEYS

THE DOCTOR:
This crane. Time to wake up a beetle.

SCENE 78: ON STAGE

ACE: (as slave, wooden)
What are you doing in there, oh Master?

ARISTOPHANES: (calling from indoors)
You'll see, oh slave. For I am going to bring peace to this City.

CHEERS FROM THE CROWDS.

ARISTOPHANES:
… and to Sparta!

FX: MORE CHEERS. ESPECIALLY FROM THE SPARTANS.

CLEON: (heckling)
Come Aristophanes! Show us your peace!

ARISTOPHANES:
You, Cleon, hush now.

ACE:
But how?

ARISTOPHANES: (emerges)
By flying up to heaven on this! Ta-Da.

FX: DOORS ARE FLUNG OPEN. AND WITH A CREAKING NOISE, ARISTOPHANES IS BROUGHT OUT AND HANGS THERE. NERVOUS TITTERS. CLEON GASPS.

ACE:
On that?

ARISTOPHANES:
Why yes.

ACE:
You're going to fly to heaven on a dung beetle?
Someone's full of it.

ARISTOPHANES:
Have a little faith, slave. Come Noble Pegasus! To heaven!

CREAKING.

ARISTOPHANES:
To heaven!

FX: CREAK.

ARISTOPHANES: (hissing)
Tyrgius, wake up!

TYRGIUS: (sleepy)
Whaaaaat?

ARISTOPHANES:
My steed awakes! (LOUD WHISPER) Come on, flap flap!

TYRGIUS:
What? Oh no. Am I in one of your plays?

ARISTOPHANES:
(SOFT) Yes. (LOUD) What's that Dung Beetle? You can't wait to fly me to Heaven to claim Peace?

TYRGIUS:
Dung beetle?!?

ARISTOPHANES:
Giddy-up! And take care not to fly too close to the sun!

TYRGIUS:
I hate you.

FX: BUZZING. BUZZING. AND THE BEETLE LIFTS OFF.

ARISTOPHANES:
Up! Up! And! Away!

FX: ARISTOPHANES FLIES AWAY. THE AUDIENCE CHEER AND WILD APPLAUSE. UNDER THIS...

CLEON:
No! Gods, no! My Fury! (RUNNING IN TERROR) Get that horrible thing away from me!

FX: THE BUZZING GROWS LOUDER

ARISTOPHANES: (distant)
See, Athens! See – Cleon flees at the very mention of the word peace! Look! Look at him run!

FX: THE PEOPLE JEER AS CLEON RUNS AWAY

SCENE 79: BEHIND THE SCENES

FX: ACE WALKS IN FROM THE STAGE

ACE:
Well, thank Zeus that's over.

LAST LINES OF PLAY DISTANT.
("Oh! Peace, mighty queen, accept the sacrifices we offer you.
Put an end to the words of war.
Let the Greeks once more drink the cup of friendship.
Blood cannot please Peace, so let us spill none upon her altar. ")

FX: DISTANT WILD APPLAUSE. ARISTOPHANES AND TYRGIUS ENTER

ARISTOPHANES: (coming in)
That went very well. They'll have trouble topping that. No-one else has ever had a flying beetle before.

TYRGIUS:
Oh the indignity!

ARISTOPHANES:
Lighten up, Pegasus. You stole the show. Didn't you have fun?

TYRGIUS:
… a little.

ARISTOPHANES:
And did you see – when you took flight, Cleon scarpered!

TYRGIUS:
Ummm....

FX: THE DOCTOR ENTERS

THE DOCTOR: Tyrgius – can I have a word?

TYRGIUS:
What about? I'm still very tired.

THE DOCTOR:
Yes. It's about that.

SCENE 80: OUTSIDE ATHENS

FX: CLEON IS TRUDGING THROUGH THE DIRT. THERE'S A DISTANT BUZZING NOISE AS TYRGIUS FLIES IN

CLEON: (ON THE GROUND)
Stay back Fury! Haven't you done enough? Hounded me out of my city! Leave me alone!

THE DOCTOR: (on high, sat on Tyrgiush)
Hello, Cleon.

CLEON:
Doctor! You're behind this!

THE DOCTOR:
Leaving us so soon?

CLEON:
Are you Zeus, that you unleashed this Fury on me?

TYRGIUS:
Fury?

THE DOCTOR:
The Furies only pursue those who've done something wrong... have you done something wrong, Cleon?

CLEON:
No!

THE DOCTOR:
Sure?

CLEON:
Life's complicated. Not like one of your fables. I just tried my best. What do you want me to say, Doctor? It's the end of my tragedy, is that it? Before he goes into the wilderness, the defeated hero makes a big speech?

THE DOCTOR: (softly)
I've had enough of speeches.

CLEON:
Then what? Your Fury's haunted my dreams ever since I fell in battle three months ago. I thought it was the end – but I woke to find my wounds healed and this scarab hovering over me.

TYRGIUS:
Ah.

CLEON:
And you've never left me!

THE DOCTOR:
If you go now Cleon, I promise this Fury will follow you no more.

CLEON:
Fine. I leave Athens. To aliens and Spartans. I wonder how it will manage without me.

THE DOCTOR:
Oh it will. Good cities always survive their leaders. Goodbye, Cleon.

FX: CLEON WALKS ON. THE BEETLE FLIES UP AND AWAY. FOCUS SHIFTS TO THE DOCTOR AND TYRGIUS.

THE DOCTOR:
Tyrgius, three months ago you saw Cleon wounded in battle, did you not?

TYRGIUS:
Yes. I simply went to see what the great Pelopennesian Wars (*Pel-opp-en-ease-ian*) were like... - so much blood and horror! - and suddenly, Cleon went down. I cured him without thinking.

THE DOCTOR:
Cleon was supposed to die that day. That's what's been draining your strength, causing the problem with your mask – you've not just been fighting his body, you've been fighting the universe.

TYRGIUS:
Now he's gone?

THE DOCTOR:
Into exile. A peaceful, and probably short-lived retirement. So long as you keep away from him.

TYRGIUS:
I will.

THE DOCTOR:
Your holiday is over, Tyrgius. Go home. And it's time I got back to the theatre. I believe Aristophanes has good news.

SCENE 81: BEHIND THE SCENES

FX: WILD APPLAUSE FROM THE THEATRE. ARISTOPHANES RUNS IN.

ARISTOPHANES:
First prize! First prize! I've actually won! There shall be A PARTY to end all parties!!!

FX: GOES PAST LAUGHING

ACE:
But wasn't there only the one play?

HECTOR:
Who cares?

ACE:
Cheer up, Hector. One thing I've learned – history's like a toddler. Beautiful and delicate, has a habit of bouncing back.

HECTOR:
History's not beautiful. War. Plague. Slavery. I tried to... I don't know what I tried to do. But we've done nothing except help the Doctor invent Chucklevision.

ACE:
Is that what you think?

FX: ENTER ADONIA.

ADONIA:
Ace! There you are!

ACE:
Adonia! (to HECTOR) Hector, wait a mo, would you?

HECTOR:
Sure. I'll be over here.

FX: HECTOR WALKS OFF.

ACE:
Adonia. How did you find the theatre?

ADONIA:
I liked the dancing.

ACE:
There wasn't much dancing.

ADONIA:
I know.

ACE:
Oh.

FX: SLIGHT, AWKWARD LAUGH.

ACE:
So, what you going to do now?

ADONIA:
Go back outside the walls. We did not win this City fairly. We shall attack again... (SMILES) Tomorrow. Tonight, we are going to a party. We've been invited by those men over there. They have promised to introduce us to wine.

ACE: (looks)
Wow. What! Are! They!?

ADONIA:
Apparently they are Athletes. For Athenians they are not too puny.

ACE:
You can say that again. Well, have a good time,

ADONIA:
We intend to (SMILE). Goodbye Ace of Athens. It's been... fun.

ACE:
Goodbye Adonia of Sparta.

FX: ADONIA GOES. ACE LOOKS AROUND.

ACE:
Hector...?

SCENE 82: AT THE TOP OF THE THEATRE.

FX: DISTANT HAPPY REVELRY.

THE DOCTOR:
Hector! There you are.

HECTOR:
Doctor. Hey.

THE DOCTOR:
Lovely view from the top of the theatre. All of Athens.

HECTOR:
Is that all history is to you, Doctor? Nice views?

THE DOCTOR:
Ouch.

HECTOR:
I messed up, sure. But...

THE DOCTOR:
History's like life. It's complicated.

HECTOR:
You and Ace keep telling me what history's like. I just see people who need helping. And I tried.

THE DOCTOR:
Didn’t really work out, though.

HECTOR:
No. (SARCASTIC) But hey, at least you put on your panto.

THE DOCTOR:
Silly fun, wasn't it? Yet, it's quite famous, you know.

HECTOR:
Seriously?

THE DOCTOR:
Oh yes. A man flies into heaven on a beetle in search of peace. Just the play a man exhausted by decades of war, death and plague would write. Silly fun.

HECTOR:
Still, it won.

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THE DOCTOR:
Yes. A play performed in front of the entire city. Who voted for it to win. Athens just voted for Peace. And a fortnight from now.. the war between Athens and Sparta will be over.

HECTOR:
Wait. Doctor.... Was that your plan all along?

THE DOCTOR:
Well, I'd like to think I've helped. Call it a hobby. Backing Aristophanes' plays when no-one else would.

HECTOR:
You cunning old fox.

THE DOCTOR:
Just doing my bit. His one about The Birds is lovely. Set in a place called Cloud Cuckoo Land.

FX: ACE COMES UP.

ACE:
Hey, you two. You're missing quite a party. Those Spartans really can dance.

HECTOR:
Afraid I'm not in a party mood.

ACE:
The old Hex was a champion sulker too, you know.

DOCTOR: (warning)
Ace...

ACE:
What? You're not the same, Hector Schofield, but you try your best.

HECTOR: (bitter)
Cheers.

ACE:
Don't sweat it. History's back on the right track. Isn't it?

THE DOCTOR: (considering)
Well... over in Macedonia *(Mass-ee-dough-knee-a)*, a King is right now looking for a tutor for his son. He'll pick an Athenian called Aristotle, and his pupil will be so impressed by him he won't wipe out the Greeks. He'll enslave them, but he won't wipe them out.

ACE:
Huh?

THE DOCTOR:
Aristotle's pupil is Alexander the Great. He's still a fan of Greek Theatre. When he grows up. And conquers the world.

HECTOR:
So you're saying that's how history's supposed to go?

ACE:
Aren't the details now a bit wrong?

THE DOCTOR:
Well yes, but I'll just nip forward and edit Wikipedia.

ACE:
Oh. (LAUGHS)

HECTOR:
And that's it, isn't it, for the two of you? Death and bloodshed and empires – it's all FUNNY.

ACE:
Hey!

THE DOCTOR:
No...

HECTOR:
Forgive me, I don't get the joke.

ACE:
Hex would have.

HECTOR:
Yeah. You keep banging on about how much better than me he was.

THE DOCTOR:
No-

HECTOR:
Oh, you do. Trust me. Look at you both – laughing and dancing as empires fall. It's funny for you. Well, you can keep your jokes.

ACE:
That's not fair.

HECTOR:
Would Hex have stood here laughing? If that's what a hero is, then I'm glad I'm not one. Sorry I saw people dying and tried to stop it. So, I messed up. Fine. I quit.

CONTINUES ON NEXT PAGE

ACE:
Hector –

HECTOR:
You heard. Take me home.

END